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September 19, 1777–January 31, 1778

Paul H. Smith, Editor

Gerard W. Gawalt, Rosemary Fry Plakas, Eugene R. Sheridan  
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## Editorial Method and Apparatus

In its treatment of documents this edition of delegate letters strives to achieve a middle ground between facsimile reproduction and thorough modernization. The original spelling and grammar are allowed to stand except where editorial changes or insertions are required to make the text intelligible. For example, when a badly misspelled word is misleading, the correct spelling is inserted in roman type in brackets after the word. Moreover, words omitted through oversight have been supplied at appropriate places in italic type in brackets. Obvious slips of the pen and inadvertent repetitions are usually silently corrected. Capitalization and punctuation have been standardized according to certain conventions. Each sentence begins with a capital letter, as do all proper and geographic names as well as days of the week and months of the year. Doubtful cases have been resolved in favor of modern usage; otherwise the usage of the original texts has been followed. Generally, abbreviations, contractions, and monetary signs are preserved as they appear in manuscript except when they are ambiguous or misleading. On the other hand, the thorn and the tilde are consistently expanded. "Ye" always appears as "The," for instance, and "reçvd" as "received." Likewise, "pr." and tailed *p*'s are always expanded to "per," "pre," or "pro," as the case demands. Finally, superscript letters are always lowered to the line.

Gaps in the text are indicated by ellipses in brackets for missing words and by blank spaces in brackets for missing numbers. Conjectural readings are supplied in roman type in brackets, and editorial insertions in italic type in brackets. Material canceled in manuscript but restored to the printed text is included in italic type in angle brackets ("square parentheses"). Marginalia in letters are treated as postscripts if not obviously keyed to the body of the document, and postscripts which appear without explicit designation are supplied with a *P.S.* in brackets. Documents are arranged chronologically, with more than one document of the same date arranged alphabetically according to writer. Documents dated only by the month or by the year are placed at the end of the respective month or year. Place-and-date lines always appear on the same line with the salutation regardless of their position in the manuscript.

A descriptive note at the foot of each entry provides abbreviations indicating the nature and location of the document when it was copied for this project, except for privately owned manuscripts whose ownership is explained. The descriptive note also contains information on the document's authorship if explanation is necessary, and

endorsements or addresses are quoted when they contain more than routine information. Other editorial practices employed in this work are explained in the sections on editorial apparatus which follow.

#### TEXTUAL DEVICES

The following devices will be used in this work to clarify the text.

[. . .], [. . . .]	One or two words missing and not conjecturable.
[. . .] <sup>1</sup> , [. . . .] <sup>1</sup>	More than two words missing; subjoined footnote estimates amount of material missing.
[     ]	Number or part of a number missing or illegible.
[     ] <sup>1</sup>	Blank space in manuscript; explanation in subjoined footnote.
[roman]	Conjectural reading for missing or illegible matter; question mark inserted if reading is doubtful.
[ <i>italic</i> ]	Editorial insertion in the text.
< <i>italic</i> >	Matter crossed out in manuscript but restored.

#### DESCRIPTIVE SYMBOLS

The following symbols are used in this work to describe the kinds of documents drawn upon. When more than one symbol is used in the descriptive note, the first to appear is that from which the main text is taken.

RC	recipient's copy
FC	file copy
LB	letterbook copy
MS	manuscript
Tr	transcript (used to designate not only contemporary and later handwritten copies of manuscripts, but also printed documents)

#### LOCATION SYMBOLS

The following symbols, denoting institutions holding the manuscripts printed in the present volume, are taken from *Symbols of American Libraries*, 11th ed. (Washington: Library of Congress, 1976).

CSmH	Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.
Ct	Connecticut State Library, Hartford
CtHi	Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford
CtY	Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
DLC	Library of Congress



DNA	National Archives and Records Service
DeHi	Historical Society of Delaware, Wilmington
ICarbS	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale
IHi	Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield
M-Ar	Massachusetts Archives, Boston
MA	Amherst College, Amherst, Mass.
MB	Boston Public Library
MH-H	Harvard University, Houghton Library
MHi	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
MWalB	Brandeis University, Waltham, Mass.
MdAA	Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis
MdBJ-G	John Work Garrett Library, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.
MdFreHi	Historical Society of Frederick County, Frederick, Md.
MdHi	Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore
MeHi	Maine Historical Society, Portland
MiDbEI	Edison Institute, Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village Library, Dearborn, Mich.
MnHi	Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul
N	New York State Library, Albany
NBLiHi	Long Island Historical Society, Brooklyn
NHi	New-York Historical Society, New York
NHPr	Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, N.Y.
NN	New York Public Library, New York
NNC	Columbia University, New York
NNPM	Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
Nc-Ar	North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, Raleigh
NcU	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
Nh-Ar	New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, Concord
NhD	Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
NhHi	New Hampshire Historical Society, Concord
Nj	New Jersey State Library, Trenton
NjHi	New Jersey Historical Society, Newark
NjMoHP	Morristown National Historical Park, Morristown, N.J.
NjP	Princeton University, Princeton, N.J.
OCIWHI	Western Reserve Historical Society, Cleveland, Ohio
PBMCA	Moravian Church Northern Province Archives, Bethlehem, Pa.
PHC	Haverford College, Haverford, Pa.
PHarH	Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg
PHi	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
PPAmP	American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia
PPL	Library Company of Philadelphia

PPRF	Rosenbach Foundation, Philadelphia
PU	University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
PYHi	Historical Society of York County, York, Pa.
R-Ar	Rhode Island State Archives, Providence
RHi	Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence
RPB-JH	John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, R.I.
RPJCB	John Carter Brown Library, Providence, R.I.
ScHi	South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston
Vi	Virginia State Library, Richmond
ViHi	Virginia Historical Society, Richmond
ViStrR	Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, Stratford, Va.
ViU	University of Virginia, Charlottesville

## ABBREVIATIONS AND SHORT TITLES

Abbreviations and short titles frequently cited in the present volume are identified below.

Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield)

Adams, John. *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*. Edited by Lyman H. Butterfield et al. 4 vols. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1961.

Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield)

Butterfield, Lyman H., et al., eds. *Adams Family Correspondence*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Belknap Press, 1963-.

Adams, *Works* (Adams)

Adams, John. *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States*. . . . Edited by Charles Francis Adams. 10 vols. Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1850-56.

Adams, *Writings* (Cushing)

Adams, Samuel. *The Writing of Samuel Adams*. Edited by Harry A. Cushing. 4 vols. Boston: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904-8.

Austin, *Life of Gerry*

Austin, James T. *The Life of Elbridge Gerry, with Contemporary Letters to the Close of the American Revolution*. 2 vols. Boston: Wells and Lilly, 1828-29.

*Bio. Dir. Cong.*

U.S. Congress. *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971.

Burnett, *Letters*

Burnett, Edmund C., ed. *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress*. 8 vols. Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1921-36.

Clinton, *Papers* (Hastings)

Clinton, George. *Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York, 1777-1795, 1801-1804*. Edited by Hugh Hastings and



J. A. Holden. 10 vols. New York and Albany: Wynkoop Hallenbeck Crawford Co. et al., 1899–1914.

*DAB*

*Dictionary of American Biography*. Edited by Allen Johnson and Dumas Malone.

*DNB*

*Dictionary of National Biography*. Edited by Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee.

Evans, *Am. Bibliography*

Evans, Charles. *American Bibliography*. 12 vols. Chicago: Privately printed, 1903–34.

Franklin, *Writings* (Smyth)

Franklin, Benjamin. *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*. Edited by Albert Smyth. 10 vols. New York: Macmillan Co., 1905–7.

Freeman, *Washington*

Freeman, Douglas S. *George Washington, a Biography*. 7 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948–57.

Gardiner, *Warren-Gerry Correspondence*

Gardiner, Harvey C., ed. *A Study in Dissent: The Warren-Gerry Correspondence, 1776–1792*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968.

Henry, *Patrick Henry*

Henry, William Wirt. *Patrick Henry; Life, Correspondence and Speeches*. 3 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891.

Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*

Jackson, John W. *The Pennsylvania Navy, 1775–1781: The Defense of the Delaware*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1974.

Jay, *Papers* (Morris)

Jay, John. *John Jay; the Making of a Revolutionary: Unpublished Papers, 1745–1780*. Edited by Richard B. Morris et al. New York: Harper & Row, 1975.

*JCC*

U.S. Continental Congress. *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774–1789*. 34 vols. Edited by Worthington C. Ford et al. Washington: Library of Congress, 1904–37.

*Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*

New York. *Journals of the Provincial Congress, Provincial Convention, Committee of Safety and Council of Safety of the State of New York, 1775–1777*. 2 vols. Albany: T. Weed, 1842.

Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda)

Idzerda, Stanley J. et al., eds. *Lafayette in the Age of the American Revolution: Selected Letters and Papers, 1776–1790*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977–.

Lee, *Letters* (Ballagh)

Lee, Richard Henry. *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee*. Edited by James C. Ballagh. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan Co., 1911–14.

*Md. Archives*

*Archives of Maryland.* Edited by William H. Browne et al. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1883—.

*Morgan, Naval Documents*

Morgan, William James, et al., eds. *Naval Documents of the American Revolution.* Washington: Department of the Navy, 1964—.

*N.C. State Records*

North Carolina. *The State Records of North Carolina.* Edited by Walter Clark. Vols. 11–26. Winston and Goldsboro, N.C.: M.I. and J.C. Stewart et al., 1895–1914.

*NYHS Collections*

*Collections of the New-York Historical Society*

*Pa. Archives*

*Pennsylvania Archives.* 9 series, 119 vols. in 120. Philadelphia: J. Severns & Co., 1852–56; Harrisburg: State printer, 1874–1935.

*Pa. Assembly Minutes (1778)*

Pennsylvania. *Minutes of the Second General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.* Lancaster: John Dunlap, 1778.

*Pa. Council Minutes*

Pennsylvania. *Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, from Its Organization to the Revolution.* 6 vols. [Colonial Records of Pennsylvania, vols. 11–16]. Harrisburg: Theo. Fenn & Co., 1852–53.

*Paullin, Marine Committee Letters*

Paullin, Charles O., ed. *Out-Letters of Continental Marine Committee and Board of Admiralty, 1776–1780.* 2 vols. New York: Printed for the Naval History Society by the DeVinne Press, 1914.

*PCC*

Papers of the Continental Congress. National Archives and Records Service. Washington, D.C.

*PMHB*

*Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography.*

*Shipton, Harvard Graduates*

Shipton, Clifford K. *Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College.* Sibley's Harvard Graduates. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1873—.

*Simms, Laurens Army Correspondence*

Laurens, John. *The Army Correspondence of Colonel John Laurens in the Years 1777–78.* Edited by William Gilmore Simms. New York: n.p., 1867.

*Sullivan, Letters (Hammond)*

Sullivan, John. *Letters and Papers of Major-General John Sullivan.* Edited by Otis G. Hammond. 3 vols. Collections of the New Hampshire Historical Society, vols. 13–15. Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1930–39.

*Warren-Adams Letters*

*Warren-Adams Letters, Being Chiefly a Correspondence among*

*John Adams, Samuel Adams and James Warren.* 2 vols. Massachusetts Historical Society Collections, vols. 72-73. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1917-25.

Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick)

Washington, George. *The Writings of George Washington.* Edited by John C. Fitzpatrick. 39 vols. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1931-44.

Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*

Wharton, Francis, ed. *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States.* 6 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889.



## Acknowledgments

To the Library of Congress, the Congress of the United States, and the Ford Foundation this edition owes its existence. It is fitting, therefore, that we take this opportunity to acknowledge the foresight of the Library's administration in planning a timely and comprehensive observance of the American Revolution Bicentennial, of the Congress in funding a Bicentennial Office in the Library, and of the Ford Foundation in making a generous grant in support of this project as a scholarly contribution to the celebration of the Bicentennial era. It is with the most profound gratitude that the editors acknowledge their appreciation to all those who bore responsibility for the decisions that made possible these contributions. Our appreciation is also extended to the innumerable persons who have contributed to enriching the holdings of the Library of Congress to make it the premier institution for conducting research on the American Revolution.

The photocopies of the more than twenty thousand documents that have been collected for this project have been assembled through the cooperation of several hundred institutions and private persons devoted to preserving the documentary record upon which the history and traditions of the American people rest, and it is to their work that a documentary publication of this nature should ultimately be dedicated. Unfortunately, the many individual contributors to this collecting effort cannot be adequately recognized, but for permission to print documents appearing in the present volume, we are especially grateful to the following institutions: the American Philosophical Society, Amherst College, Boston Public Library, Brandeis University, John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Columbia University, Connecticut Historical Society, Connecticut State Library, Dartmouth College, Historical Society of Delaware, Historical Society of Frederick County, Maryland, John Work Garrett Library, Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum, Harvard University, Haverford College, Henry E. Huntington Library, Illinois State Historical Library, Robert E. Lee Memorial Association, Long Island Historical Society, Maine Historical Society, Maryland Hall of Records, Maryland Historical Society, Massachusetts Archives Division, Massachusetts Historical Society, Minnesota Historical Society, Moravian Church Northern Province Archives, Bethlehem, Pa., Pierpont Morgan Library, Morristown National Historical Park, National Archives and Records Service, New Hampshire Division of Archives and Records Management, New Hampshire Historical Society, New Jersey

Historical Society, New Jersey State Library, New-York Historical Society, New York Public Library, New York State Library, North Carolina State Department of Archives and History, University of North Carolina, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania, Library Company of Philadelphia, Princeton University, Rhode Island Historical Society, Rhode Island State Archives, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Rosenbach Foundation, South Carolina Historical Society, Southern Illinois University, Virginia Historical Society, Virginia State Library, University of Virginia, Western Reserve Historical Society, Yale University, and Historical Society of York County, Pennsylvania. And in addition we express our thanks and appreciation to the following persons: Mrs. Elsie O. Sang and Mr. Philip D. Sang, Capt. J. G. M. Stone, and Mr. Justin Turner.

This work has benefited not only from Edmund C. Burnett's path-finding 8-volume edition of *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* but also from the generous cooperation of the editors of several other documentary publications with a common focus on the revolutionary era. From them the Library has borrowed heavily and to them it owes a debt it can never adequately acknowledge. It is a pleasure to give special thanks to the editors of the papers of John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Henry Laurens, James Madison, and George Washington. Finally, we owe thanks to the historians who have served on the Advisory Committee on the Library's American Revolution Bicentennial Program, and especially to Mr. Julian P. Boyd, Mr. Lyman H. Butterfield, and Mr. Merrill Jensen, who generously acted as an advisory committee for the *Letters* project.

Paul H. Smith  
American Revolution Bicentennial Office  
Manuscript Division





## Chronology of Congress

SEPTEMBER 19, 1777–JANUARY 31, 1778

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| September 19–26 | Delegates in flight to Lancaster, Pa.  |
| September 27    | Convenes at Lancaster; adjourns to York.   |
| September 30    | Convenes at York.  |
| October 1       | Resolves to meet twice daily.  |
| October 2       | Authorizes delegates to draw provisions from Continental commissaries.   |
| October 4       | Commends sundry officers for bravery in defense against General Burgoyne's northern invasion.  |
| October 7       | Debates "mode of voting" under draft Articles of Confederation.  |
| October 8       | Adopts penalties for "communicating" with the enemy; commends Washington for the "brave exertions" of his army at Germantown.                              |
| October 9–14    | Debates taxation proposals under draft Articles of Confederation.  |
| October 15      | Debates powers of Congress under draft Articles of Confederation.  |
| October 17      | Reorganizes the Board of War.  |
| October 20      | Exonerates Gen. John Sullivan for failure of Staten Island expedition; learns informally of General Gates' capture of General Burgoyne's army at Saratoga. |
| October 22      | Orders inquiry into the conduct of Indian Commissioner George Morgan.  |
| October 23–30   | Debates and revises draft Articles of Confederation.   |
| October 29      | President Hancock takes leave of Congress.   |
| October 31      | Receives official notification of the Saratoga Convention.   |
| November 1      | Elects Henry Laurens president of Congress.  |
| November 4      | Commends General Gates and his army for their defense against Burgoyne's invasion and various other officers and units for their defense of the Delaware.  |

- November 7 Names new appointees to reorganized Board of War.
- November 10-14 Conducts final debates on Articles of Confederation.
- November 15 Adopts Articles of Confederation.
- November 17 Transmits Articles of Confederation to states for their consideration.
- November 19 Directs General Washington to inquire into the treatment of American prisoners.
- November 20 Adopts report on pacification of the western frontier.
- November 21 Recalls Commissioner Silas Deane from the court of France.
- November 22 Adopts economic program asking the states to levy taxes, call in paper money, and regulate prices.
- November 24 Adopts measures for improving the provisioning of the army.
- November 27 Recommends confiscation of loyalist property in the states; completes reconstitution of the Board of War, Horatio Gates named president.
- November 28 Appoints committee to confer with General Washington; orders inquiry into the failures of the Rhode Island expedition and the Delaware River defenses; appoints John Adams commissioner to France.
- November 29 Appoints committee to obtain a French translation of the Articles of Confederation and to invite Canada "to accede to the union of these states."
- December 1 Rejects alteration of the Saratoga Convention to permit embarkation of Burgoyne's army from Rhode Island.
- December 3 Resolves to seek \$2 million loan from France and Spain; directs suppression of Delaware loyalists; adopts instructions for retaining continued neutrality of the Six Nations; endorses proposal for a surprise attack against Lake Champlain.
- December 8 Orders Silas Deane's immediate return to Congress.
- December 10 Denounces Gen. William Howe's treatment of American prisoners; authorizes General Washington to impress supplies in Pennsylvania.



- December 13 Appoints Gen. Thomas Conway to newly constituted post of inspector general of the army.
- December 16 Receives report of the committee at headquarters.
- December 19 Questions General Washington's plans for a winter cantonment.
- December 26 Debates implementation of the Saratoga Convention.
- December 30 Grants navy boards increased authority over naval officers; extends General Washington's powers to impress supplies, discipline officers, and punish spies.
- January 2 Dismisses Esek Hopkins from the Continental Navy.
- January 8 Detains Convention Army in America until properly notified of Britain's "explicit ratification of the convention of Saratoga."
- January 11 Appoints committee to repair to headquarters to concert with General Washington on the reform of the army.
- January 12 Examines John Folger on the theft of despatches from the commissioners in France.
- January 14 Accepts Baron Steuben's tender of services as a volunteer in the Continental Army.
- January 15 Orders creation of additional magazines for supply of the army in Pennsylvania.
- January 16 Instructs committee at camp to evaluate an attack on Philadelphia.
- January 17 Resolves to issue an additional \$10 million in loan office certificates.
- January 20 Appoints Charles Carroll and Gouverneur Morris to the committee at camp to replace members named from the Board of War.
- January 21 Adopts measures to secure improved British treatment of American prisoners of war.
- January 23 Names General Lafayette to command an invasion of Canada.
- January 27 Appoints committee to confer on the reform of the hospital department.
- January 30-31 Studies proposals for reform of the quartermaster department and for retaining the neutrality of the Indians in the northern department.

## List of Delegates to Congress

This section lists both the dates on which delegates were elected to terms falling within the period covered by this volume and the inclusive dates of their attendance. The former are generally ascertainable from contemporary state records, but the latter are often elusive bits of information derived from the journals of Congress or extrapolated from references contained in the delegates' correspondence, and in such cases the "facts" are inevitably conjectural. It is not possible to determine interruptions in the attendance of many delegates, and no attempt has been made to record interruptions in service caused by illness or brief trips home, especially of delegates from New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and Pennsylvania living within easy access of Congress. For occasional references to such periods of intermittent service as survive in the correspondence and notes of various delegates, see the index under individual delegates. Until fuller information is provided in a consolidated summary of delegate attendance in the final volume of this series, the reader is advised to consult Burnett, *Letters*, 2:xxxix-lxxiii, 3:li-lxii, for additional information on conjectural dates of attendance. Brief biographical sketches of all the delegates are available in the *Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971*, and fuller sketches of more than half of the delegates can be found in the *Dictionary of American Biography*.

### CONNECTICUT

*Andrew Adams*

Elected: October 11, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Eliphalet Dyer*

Elected: October 10, 1776; October 11, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778

*Oliver Ellsworth*

Elected: October 11, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Titus Hosmer*

Elected: October 11, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Samuel Huntington*

Elected: October 10, 1776; October 11, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Richard Law*

Elected: October 10, 1776

Attended: September to December 3, 1777

*Roger Sherman*

Elected: October 10, 1776; October 11, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*William Williams*

Elected: October 10, 1776

Attended: September to December 3, 1777

*Oliver Wolcott*

Elected: October 10, 1776; October 11, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

## DELAWARE

*Thomas McKean*

Elected: December 17, 1777

Attended: January 30–31, 1778

*George Read*

Elected: November 8, 1776

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Caesar Rodney*

Elected: December 17, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*James Sykes*

Elected: February 22, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Nicholas Van Dyke*

Elected: February 22; December 17, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

## GEORGIA

*Nathan Brownson*

Elected: June 7, 1777

Attended: September to October 9, 1777

*Lyman Hall*

Elected: June 7, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Edward Langworthy*

Elected: June 7, 1777

Attended: November 17, 1777, to January 31, 1778

*George Walton*

Elected: June 7, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778



*Joseph Wood*

Elected: June 7, 1777

Attended: November 17, 1777, to January 31, 1778

## MARYLAND

*Charles Carroll of Carrollton*

Elected: February 15; December 5, 1777

Attended: September 27 to October 16? 1777; January 17–21, 1778

*Samuel Chase*

Elected: February 15; December 5, 1777

Attended: September 27 to October 16? 1777

*James Forbes*

Elected: December 22, 1777

Attended: January 1–31, 1778

*John Henry*

Elected: December 22, 1777

Attended: January 20–31, 1778

*Joseph Nicholson*

Elected: December 5, 1777

Declined

*William Paca*

Elected: February 15; December 5, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*George Plater*

Elected: December 5, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Benjamin Rumsey*

Elected: February 15, 1777

Attended: November 4? to December 24? 1777

*William Smith*

Elected: February 15, 1777

Attended: October 4 to December 24? 1777

*Thomas Stone*

Elected: February 15; December 5, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

## MASSACHUSETTS

*John Adams*

Elected: November 15, 1776; December 4, 1777

Attended: September to November 10, 1777

*Samuel Adams*

Elected: November 15, 1776; December 4, 1777

Attended: September to November 10, 1777

*Francis Dana*

Elected: November 15, 1776; December 4, 1777

Attended: November 17, 1777, to January 31, 1778 (on mission with committee at camp, ca. January 17 to March 1778)

*Elbridge Gerry*

Elected: November 15, 1776; December 4, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778 (on mission with committee at headquarters, ca. November 29 to December 15, 1777)

*John Hancock*

Elected: November 15, 1776; December 4, 1777

Attended: September to October 29, 1777

*James Lovell*

Elected: November 15, 1776; December 4, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778

*Robert Treat Paine*

Elected: November 15, 1776; December 4, 1777

Did not attend in 1777-78

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

*Josiah Bartlett*

Elected: December 25, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Nathaniel Folsom*

Elected: April 1, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778 (on mission with committee at camp, ca. January 17 to March 1778)

*George Frost*

Elected: April 1, 1777

Attended: December 8, 1777, to January 31, 1778

*William Whipple*

Elected: December 25, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

## NEW JERSEY

*Elias Boudinot*

Elected: November 20, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Abraham Clark*

Elected: November 30, 1776; November 20, 1777

Attended: December 11, 1777, to January 31, 1778

*Jonathan Elmer*

Elected: November 30, 1776; November 20, 1777

Attended: October 14?-November 21, 1777

*Nathaniel Scudder*

Elected: November 20, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*John Witherspoon*

Elected: November 30, 1776; November 20, 1777

Attended: September to October 30, 1777; December 17, 1777, to January 31, 1778

## NEW YORK

*James Duane*

Elected: May 13; October 3, 1777

Attended: September to December 4, 1777 (on mission to confer with Gen. John Stark and northern Indian commissioners, December 1777–January 1778)

*William Duer*

Elected: May 13; October 3, 1777

Attended: September to November 9; November 19, 1777, to January 31, 1778

*Francis Lewis*

Elected: October 3, 1777

Attended: December 5, 1777, to January 31, 1778 (on Marine Committee business in Baltimore, ca. January 21–February 9, 1778)

*Philip Livingston*

Elected: May 13; October 3, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

*Gouverneur Morris*

Elected: May 13; October 3, 1777

Attended: January 20–31, 1778 (on mission with committee at camp, January 24 to April 1778)

*Philip Schuyler*

Elected: May 13, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 1778

## NORTH CAROLINA

*Thomas Burke*

Elected: May 4, 1777

Attended: September to October 14, 1777

*Cornelius Harnett*

Elected: May 4, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778

*John Penn*

Elected: May 4, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778



## PENNSYLVANIA

*William Clingan*

Elected: September 14; December 10, 1777

Attended: November 1–28? 1777; January 1?–31, 1778

*Samuel Duffield*

Elected: September 14, 1777

Did not attend Congress

*Benjamin Franklin*

Elected: February 5; December 10, 1777

Did not attend after 1776

*Robert Morris*

Elected: February 5; December 10, 1777

Attended: September to December 12? 1777 (on mission with committee at headquarters, ca. November 29–December 12, 1777)

*Joseph Reed*

Elected: September 14; December 10, 1777

Did not attend Congress but joined committee at camp, ca. January 28, 1778

*Daniel Roberdeau*

Elected: February 5; December 10, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778

*James Smith*

Elected: December 10, 1777

Attended: December 16, 1777, to January 31, 1778

*Jonathan Bayard Smith*

Elected: February 5; December 10, 1777

Attended: December 18, 1777, to January 31, 1778

## RHODE ISLAND

*William Ellery*

Elected: May 7, 1777

Attended: November 17, 1777, to January 31, 1778

*Stephen Hopkins*

Elected: May 7, 1777

Did not attend after 1776

*Henry Marchant*

Elected: May 7, 1777

Attended: September to November 17, 1777

## SOUTH CAROLINA

*William Henry Drayton*

Elected: January 21, 1778

Did not attend January 1778

*Thomas Heyward*

Elected: January 10, 1777; January 22, 1778

Attended: September to October 31? 1777

*Richard Hutson*

Elected: January 22, 1778

Did not attend January 1778

*Henry Laurens*

Elected: January 10, 1777; January 21, 1778

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778

*John Mathews*

Elected: January 22, 1778

Did not attend January 1778

*Arthur Middleton*

Elected: January 10, 1777

Attended: September to October 16? 1777

*Charles Pinckney*

Elected: January 21, 1777

Did not attend September 1777 to January 31, 1778

*Paul Trapier*

Elected: January 21, 1777

Did not attend Congress

## VIRGINIA

*Thomas Adams*

Elected: December 9, 1777

Did not attend December 1777 to January 1778

*John Banister*

Elected: November 19, 1777

Did not attend November 1777 to January 1778

*Benjamin Harrison*

Elected: May 22, 1777

Attended: September to October 9? 1777

*John Harvie*

Elected: May 22, 1777

Attended: October 15, 1777, to January 31, 1778 (on mission with committee at camp, January 24 to February 27, 1778)

*Joseph Jones*

Elected: May 22, 1777

Attended: September to December 20? 1777

*Francis Lightfoot Lee*

Elected: May 22, 1777

Attended: September 1777 to January 31, 1778

*Richard Henry Lee*

Elected: June 24, 1777

Attended: September to December 6, 1777

## Illustrations

### Map of Pennsylvania

endpapers

Lancaster and York, Pennsylvania, where Congress convened when the British moved into Philadelphia in September 1777 and continued to meet through June 1778, are visible on the southeast quarter of a map of Pennsylvania by Robert Sayer and John Bennett, "exhibiting not only the improved parts of that Province, but also its extensive frontiers: Laid down from actual surveys and chiefly from the late map of W. Scull published in 1770; and humbly inscribed to the Honourable Thomas Penn and Richard Penn, Esquires, true and absolute proprietaries & Governors of the Province of Pennsylvania and the territories thereunto belonging." (London, 1775).

Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress.

### Lancaster, Pennsylvania

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Threatened by the advance of Gen. William Howe's army against Philadelphia, Congress adjourned on September 18, 1777, to Lancaster, Pa., where it convened on Saturday, September 27. Here the delegates deliberated but a single day, however, adjourning the same afternoon to the comparatively greater safety of York about a dozen miles west of the Susquehannah. As a town consisting of about 550 "taxables," Lancaster in 1777 had a population estimated at approximately 2,200 inhabitants. During the British occupation of Philadelphia, it was swollen nearly beyond its capacity to house all who sought safety within its boundaries, for in addition to the many Philadelphians who attempted to find refuge there, Pennsylvania officials had selected Lancaster as the temporary site of the state's government. This drawing of the town by Edouard C. V. Colbert, comte de Maulevrier, made during the Frenchman's trip through the state twenty years later, is one of the few surviving late eighteenth-century sketches of Lancaster.

From *Voyage dans l'intérieur des Etats-Unis et au Canada* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935).

### The Old Court House of York County, Pennsylvania

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As the nation's capital from September 30, 1777, to June 27, 1778, York occupies a unique place in American history. It was here that Congress was meeting when work was completed on the Articles of Confederation and here that the delegates wrestled with problems



confronting the Continental Army during the dreadful winter Washington's troops encamped at Valley Forge. The county's "Old Court House," where the delegates sat while at York, was originally built in 1754, but it was demolished in 1841 to make way for improvements deemed necessary to the community's growth. It was reconstructed in 1976 a short distance from its original site by the York County Bicentennial Commission, after excavation of the foundation of the original building and painstaking study of surviving documents to determine its dimensions and appearance.

Photograph courtesy of the York County Bicentennial Commission.

Interior of the Old Court House, York County, Pennsylvania 40

This photograph shows the chamber where Congress sat while at York in 1777-78 as it is believed to have been furnished at the time. The bench, clock, and Figure of Justice at the front of the room survive from the original courtroom.

Photograph courtesy of the York County Bicentennial Commission.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton

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Because of the disabilities placed on Roman Catholics in colonial Maryland, Charles Carroll's public career got under way slowly. Educated primarily abroad, Carroll returned to Maryland in 1765 trained in the law and prepared to share the management of his father's estate, which constituted one of the largest fortunes accumulated in the colonies. But Maryland's opposition to parliamentary control increasingly captured his attention in the wake of the Stamp Act crisis and he emerged from a pamphlet controversy with Daniel Dulany in 1773 (conducted under the pseudonym First Citizen) with a reputation as an able defender of American interests. Election to various local committees, the Maryland Council of Safety, and the Maryland Convention during 1774-76 preceded his election in July 1776 to Congress, where he served intermittently for approximately two years. His relationship with Congress did not begin with his election as a delegate, however, for he had gone to Philadelphia in September 1774 to observe personally the First Continental Congress and had been appointed by the Second Congress as commissioner to Canada in February 1776 with Benjamin Franklin and Samuel Chase, doubtless on the strength of his religion and the reputation of his pen. Although he did not participate in the congressional debate on independence, he arrived in Philadelphia before the August 2 signing of the Declaration; and since he lived until 1832, to the age of 95, he eventually became the last surviving signer. In Congress he was particularly interested in military affairs, served notably on the Board of War, and was one of Washington's most vigorous supporters against critics who worked in behalf of the claims of oppo-

nents of the commander in chief such as Gen. Thomas Conway. Subsequently Carroll served several years in the Maryland Senate and was elected to the Philadelphia Convention in 1787, although he failed to attend its proceedings on the federal Constitution. He was elected to the first United States Senate in 1789, where he served until 1793, and then returned to the Maryland Senate until 1804, but the last half of his long life was given over increasingly to the management of his vast personal properties.

Engraving by James B. Longacre after a painting by Robert Field. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

## Henry Laurens

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Laurens, a wealthy South Carolina planter-merchant and experienced political leader, was one of the more remarkable delegates elected to the Continental Congress. A convinced republican, an indefatigable worker, and a man of rigid integrity, Laurens made a powerful impression on his fellow delegates almost as soon as he entered Congress in July 1777. In the words of John Adams, who was not alone in such praise, Laurens was “a great acquisition—of the first rank in his State, Lt. Governor, of ample Fortune, of great Experience, having been 20 Years in their assembly, of a clear Head and a firm Temper, of extensive Knowledge, and much Travel.” Indeed, Laurens rose so rapidly in the esteem of his fellow delegates that on November 1, 1777—less than four months after he took his seat in Congress—he was elected John Hancock’s successor as president, a position he held until his abrupt resignation in December 1778. In addition Laurens was also the wielder of a prolific pen, as his numerous private letters to his son John and many correspondents in South Carolina and the Continental Army testify. It is probably no exaggeration to state of Laurens’ election as president, however, that Congress’ gain was history’s loss, for he was almost obsessive in his attendance to the duties of his office. His voluminous presidential correspondence is generally less revealing than Hancock’s of the inner workings of Congress, while the weight of presidential business inevitably led to neglect of his more informative private letters. Fortunately for students of the American Revolution, Laurens repaired this loss after his resignation as president, producing a steady stream of notes and memoranda illuminating significant episodes in congressional history through the remainder of his term in Congress, which came to an end in November 1779. Although he returned briefly to Congress during the summer of 1780 and immediately thereafter left on a mission to negotiate a treaty with the Dutch republic, Laurens never regained the prominence he enjoyed during his earlier tenure in Congress. He was captured en route to Holland in September 1780 and imprisoned in England, where he remained until the spring of 1782 when he

was released in exchange for Cornwallis. He was appointed a peace commissioner in May 1782 but reached Paris too late to participate in peace negotiations, arriving only two days before the signing of the preliminary articles. Laurens retired from public life upon his return to America, his health broken by his confinement in the Tower of London and his spirit shattered by the tragic death in August 1782 of his son John, one of the last battle casualties of the war.

Painting by John Singleton Copley. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution.

## Articles of Confederation

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After more than a year of intermittent debate over difficult and complex issues, Congress at last approved a text of the Articles of Confederation on November 15, 1777. Two days later the delegates also adopted a circular letter of transmittal to the states urging prompt action on the articles. "This business," Congress explained, "has, in its progress, been attended with uncommon embarrassments and delay, which the most anxious solicitude and persevering diligence could not prevent. To form a permanent union, accommodated to the opinion and wishes of the delegates of so many states, differing in habits, produce, commerce, and internal police, was found to be a work which nothing but time and reflection, conspiring with a disposition to conciliate, could mature and accomplish. Hardly is it to be expected that any plan, in the variety of provisions essential to our union, should exactly correspond with the maxims and political views of every particular State. Let it be remarked, that, after most careful enquiry and the fullest information, this is proposed as the best which could be adopted to the circumstances of all; and as that alone which affords any tolerable prospect of a general ratification." Although Congress asked the states to act promptly, and set March 10, 1778, as the date for registering their approval of the document, over three years elapsed before final ratification. Not until the following June did Congress resume debate on modifying the text of the document in accordance with recommendations returned from the states pursuant to its letter of transmittal, and subsequently Maryland's opposition to provisions pertaining to western lands delayed ratification until early 1781.

The title page is illustrated from the first printing of the Articles of Confederation approved by Congress for transmission to the states in November 1777. It comes from the press of Francis Bailey at Lancaster, Pa., and bears President Henry Laurens' validating signature on the final page of the text.

Rare Book and Special Collections Division, Library of Congress.

## Thomas Conway's December 29, 1777, Letter to Washington 328

Thomas Conway, though born in Ireland, was taken to France as a boy and entered the royal army while still a youth, rising to the rank of colonel in 1772. On the strength of an introduction from Silas Deane and the very favorable first impression he made on Washington and his staff at Morristown in May 1777, Conway was elected to the rank of brigadier general and assigned to John Sullivan's division, which saw action in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown. His conduct during that period of the campaign for possession of Philadelphia won him many admirers, but by November he had become the center of controversy and offered his resignation to Congress. General Washington early saw him as a troublemaker, who stimulated dissension in the army and agitated to have General Gates named commander in chief. On the other hand, a small group of delegates and officers rallied to Conway in an effort to undermine Washington, whose lackluster performance during the 1776 and 1777 campaigns they contrasted with Gates' heroics at Saratoga. For a time Conway's star was ascendant; his resignation was not only rejected, but on December 13, 1777, he was promoted to major general over the heads of 23 senior brigadiers and named to the newly created post of inspector general of the Continental Army. Almost immediately, however, his support began to disintegrate. His continued intriguing against Washington played into the hands of officers such as Lafayette and Stirling who thought him untrustworthy and dangerous, and many delegates who voted for his promotion turned against him when they learned of his intrigues.

Although historians have dramatized discontent with Washington during the winter of 1777-78 by labeling such expressions of dissatisfaction the "Conway Cabal," documents in volumes eight and nine of these *Letters* confirm that few leaders held Washington responsible for the ills of the Continental Army or voiced disenchantment with his performance. Indeed, except for a notable letter by Gen. Thomas Mifflin and several by James Lovell, these volumes testify to the solidity of Washington's support and suggest that Conway's career in America has been misunderstood.

George Washington Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

## Jonathan Bayard Smith 443

Smith, a prominent Philadelphia merchant who graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1760, played a prominent role in Pennsylvania's opposition to imperial control during the prerevolutionary decade. As a member or as secretary, he served on several



of the extralegal provincial bodies formed in 1774–76 to manage resistance to Britain, and he was a supporter of the new Pennsylvania constitution adopted in 1776 to replace the proprietary government. Elected to Congress in 1777, he soon became engrossed with various problems related to the enlistment and supply of the army in Pennsylvania, some of which touched issues of sensitive state-Continental relations. He resigned his seat as a delegate in September 1777 to join his company of Philadelphia Associators when the British threatened the Pennsylvania capital, but he returned to Congress at York in December and as a member of the Board of War became immersed in problems of supply, recruitment, and maintenance of morale in the army during the crisis of 1777–78. As an old friend of Joseph Reed, one of the members of the Committee at Camp at Valley Forge, Smith was kept particularly well informed during the army's winter encampment there. Following his retirement from Congress in July 1778 he was prothonotary for the county and city of Philadelphia until 1788 and subsequently served briefly as an alderman of the city and as auditor general of the state. Like most Constitutionalists in Pennsylvania politics, Smith opposed adoption of the federal Constitution and during the early years of the nineteenth century was an adherent of the Democratic-Republican party, whose candidates and policies he promoted to the end of his life in 1812.

Painting by Rembrandt Peale. Independence National Historical Park Collection.

### John Burgoyne

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John Burgoyne, famous in American history as the general who surrendered a veteran British army to Gen. Horatio Gates at Saratoga in October 1777, was the center of a fierce controversy that agitated Congress during the winter of 1777–78. At issue was the Saratoga Convention, the agreement signed by Burgoyne when he capitulated, which would have allowed him and his men to return to England on condition that they fight no more against the United States for the duration of the war. Congress was unhappy with the terms of this agreement, however, because the delegates soon realized that Burgoyne's army in America could easily be replaced with troops drawn from other parts of the empire. But they hesitated to disavow the convention for fear of compromising Congress' honor and reputation abroad.

Burgoyne committed a key blunder at a crucial moment, however, and rescued Congress from its dilemma when he denounced Massachusetts' conduct in providing accommodations for him and his officers as inadequate and a breach of the convention. Congress was therefore able to seize upon Burgoyne's assertion as evidence

that he planned to renounce the convention as soon as his army was released, and they passed a resolution on January 8, 1778, suspending the agreement until the British government formally notified Congress that it accepted the convention's terms. Since the ministry could not do so without implicitly recognizing the legitimacy of Congress, plans for returning the army to Britain were suspended.

Although Burgoyne himself was permitted to return to England in April 1778, his troops remained in the hands of their captors and most of them were subsequently marched southward to spend the remainder of the war at various locations in Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

Engraving by Robert I. Pollard, from James Murray, *An Impartial History of the Present War in America* (London, 1778).

### Francis Lightfoot Lee

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Lee, a scion of a distinguished Virginia family that contributed several leaders who played important roles on the Continental stage during the American Revolution, was a well-to-do planter who had been in the forefront of his colony's opposition to British imperial policy since 1763. Entering Congress in 1775, Lee was convinced that Great Britain was pursuing a deliberate "design of establishing arbitrary government in America" and consequently became one of the earliest congressional advocates of independence. In order to make independence a reality, Lee devoted much of his attention in Congress to military affairs, becoming a key member of the Board of War and several committees dealing with matters of concern to the Continental Army. His efforts to obtain provisions for Washington's troops as chairman of the Committee on Emergency Provisions in December 1777 typify his work in this vital area. Although Lee lacked the forensic skill of his more celebrated brother Richard Henry, he won the respect of the delegates for his diligent committee work and was briefly considered as a possible successor to John Hancock as president of Congress in 1777. After serving in Congress to 1779 and subsequently in the Virginia Senate to 1782, Lee retired from public life to spend the remainder of his days at his Richmond County "Menokin" plantation.

Etching courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society.

### John Witherspoon

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John Witherspoon, a distinguished Scottish clergyman and president of the College of New Jersey, was elected to Congress seven times from 1776 to 1782 and compiled one of the most enviable of all records for diligent service to the Continental cause. Having arrived at the conclusion that British rule was incompatible with

American liberties, Witherspoon entered Congress just in time to witness the end of the debate on independence and affix his signature to the Declaration. An able penman, a shrewd debater, and an indefatigable committeeman, Witherspoon was deeply involved in many areas of congressional affairs, working on more than a hundred committees during his career as a delegate, including the Board of War and Committee for Foreign Affairs. Although he was greatly concerned about issues ranging from confederation and Continental finance to the organization of executive departments, Witherspoon focused on Congress' conduct of foreign affairs. In addition to serving as a translator for French officers in their dealings with Congress, he also followed closely the activities of America's diplomats abroad and helped to formulate instructions for the commissioners appointed to negotiate peace with Britain. Witherspoon is also of special interest to students of Congress because the texts of some of his congressional speeches have survived, often providing insights into proceedings of Congress available in no other source. Of particular interest in this volume is his lengthy January 8, 1778, address advocating suspension of the Saratoga Convention.

Painting by Charles Willson Peale, ca. 1783. Independence National Historical Park Collection.

#### Resolves on Prisoners, December 1777 and January 1778

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Congress had long been concerned about the harsh treatment of American prisoners of war, and General Washington had conducted an extensive correspondence with the British commander in chief Sir William Howe to bring about improvements in their condition. Although legally the British considered captured Americans as rebels guilty of treason, in practice they treated them as ordinary prisoners of war. Despite this concession to necessity, the lot of the prisoners was generally deplorable, characterized as it was by primitive prison facilities, inadequate diet and medical care, and insufficient clothing. As reports of particularly abusive treatment of American prisoners began to filter out of Philadelphia in November 1777, Congress asked Washington to investigate and report back to it. Washington, Commissary of Prisoners Elias Boudinot, and Col. Moses Rawlings—a Maryland officer who made an unusual personal appearance before Congress on December 17, 1777, to testify about the “treatment our prisoners in the hands of the enemy receive”—subsequently confirmed the truth of these allegations, and at the same time the Board of War conducted an extensive inquiry, all of which provided grist for Congress' December 19 and January 21 resolves on prisoners.

Washington transmitted a handbill containing a text of these resolves with his January 30, 1778, letter to General Howe. The note at the bottom of the first page of the illustration shown here, taken

from a retained copy of the handbill which Washington sent to Congress the following April, is in the hand of Washington's secretary, Col. Robert H. Harrison. Numbers in the margin on the second page of the document (not shown) indicate points on which Washington demanded "a speedy and explicit answer" from Howe. Unfortunately, the British commander never responded to these points in his correspondence with Washington, and there is no evidence the resolves led to significant improvements in the treatment of American prisoners.

From the Papers of the Continental Congress, National Archives and Records Service.

Francis Dana

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Francis Dana, a Massachusetts lawyer who graduated from Harvard College in 1762, had a long career of public service which included election to the Massachusetts Council in 1776 and to the Continental Congress in December of the same year. During his first term in Congress—which he actually attended in 1777–78 and 1784—Dana had the good fortune to serve with both his college roommate, James Lovell of Massachusetts, and his father-in-law, William Ellery of Rhode Island. He worked on many committees, including the Marine Committee and the influential Board of War, but Dana probably made his most important contribution to the American cause as chairman of the Committee at Camp, which met for several months with Washington and his officers at Valley Forge and played a key role in reorganizing the Continental Army during the critical early months of 1778. Between terms in Congress Dana also served the United States abroad, appointed first as secretary to peace commissioner John Adams in France in 1779 and then as the first American minister to Russia in 1780, both of which appointments proved to be frustrating experiences for the young diplomat. He was subsequently appointed a delegate to the Annapolis and Philadelphia Conventions but attended neither, although he was instrumental in securing ratification of the federal Constitution by the Massachusetts Convention. His public career was capped with his appointment in 1785 to the Massachusetts Supreme Court, where he presided as chief justice from 1792 to 1806, but his tenure on the court was sometimes noteworthy for decidedly unjudicial behavior. He was not above taking advantage of his position to propagate High Federalist views, and he has been quoted as once admonishing a grand jury: "Democracy has two Excesses to avoid, the Spirit of Inequality, which leads to Aristocracy, and the Spirit of *Extreme* Equality which leads to Despotic power."

Painting by James Sharples. Photograph courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Notarangelo.





LETTERS OF DELEGATES  
8  
September 19, 1777—  
January 31, 1778  
TO CONGRESS



## John Adams' Diary

1777. Septr. 19. Fryday

At 3 this Morning was waked by Mr. Lovell, and told that the Members of Congress were gone, some of them, a little after Mid-night. That there was a Letter from Mr. Hamilton Aid de Camp to the General, informing that the Enemy were in Poss[essio]n of the Ford and the Boats, and had it in their Power to be in Philadelphia, before Morning, and that if Congress was not removed they had not a Moment to loose.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Merchant and myself arose, sent for our Horses, and, after collecting our Things, rode off after the others. Breakfasted at Bristol, where were many Members, determined to go the Newtown Road to Reading. We rode to Trenton where We dined. Coll. Harrison, Dr. Witherspoon, all the Delegates from N.Y. and N.E. except Gerry and Lovell. Drank Tea at Mr. Spencers, lodged at Mr. S. Tuckers, at his kind Invitation.

MS (MHi). Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield), 2:264.

<sup>1</sup> At an unusual, emergency Sunday session on September 14 the delegates had resolved "That if Congress shall be obliged to remove from Philadelphia, Lancaster shall be the place at which they shall meet"; and upon receiving Hamilton's warning, after adjourning on September 18, "the members left the city, and, agreeable to the resolve of the 14, repaired to Lancaster." See *JCC*, 8:742, 754.

## John Hancock to Philemon Dickinson or Alexander McDougall

Sir, Trenton Septr. 19th. 1777

I have just time to inclose you Copies of two Letters received this morning at 12 oClock one from genl. Washington, the other from Colonel Hamilton his Aid de Camp, to which I beg leave to refer you. In consequence of Colonel Hamilton's letter I have removed my papers, & am now at this place where I shall tarry 'till I hear further.<sup>1</sup>

Should the enemy have left the Jersies, I am to request you'l please to come on with your whole force in order to reinforce general Washington as quick as possible, pursuing the line of Conduct the general has pointed out to you in his letter.

I have the honour to be, Sir, Your most obedt. hble Servt.

John Hancock Presidt

RC (DLC). In a clerical hand and signed by Hancock. Addressed: "To The Honble Major General Dickinson or Brigadier General McDougal, New Jersey."



Endorsed: "The Express to pass without hindrance. John Hancock. Trenton 19 Sept. 1777."

<sup>1</sup> Alexander Hamilton's September 18 letter to President Hancock, which warned that "If Congress have not yet left Philadelphia, they ought to do it immediately without fail, for the enemy have the means of throwing a party this night in the city," is in Alexander Hamilton, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Harold C. Syrett et al. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-), 1:326. Washington's September 17 letter to Hancock, which dealt with British advances in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, is in PCC, item 152, 5:67-68, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:230-31.

## James Lovell to Elbridge Gerry

Philadelpa 6 P.M. Friday Sept. 19th. [1777]

I arrived at my Lodgings 4 Hours ago; and after a refreshing Nap find myself in a [ . . . ] fit for News-Hunting. This City is without present Fear, but has some apprehensions that in three Days the Enemy may attempt to pass the Fords as the Swell from the late Rain will then be over.

I deliver'd yr. Message to the amiable Lucy. She has strong Suspicions that the Servant of the Gentleman who left Bristol with J. Adams has not only the Articles under present Consideration but also your Spurs. I leave it to your discrete Judgement to pursue this Hint. She thinks she has good information of his being a Sign-Finger.

Should I not be routed suddenly from this you will let me do you & our Colleagues & other Friends some Service or Command.

I am affectionately Yours,

J.L.

Dear Sir

Satday P.M.

I find both Mrs. Y<sup>1</sup> & L[ucy] averse to your taking any concern in further Scrutiny, as it will probably be fruitless, a wife of the Person meant above remaining here. I would not however tear up what I had written, that you may do as you judge as you think best upon the whole.

But pray, Brother Geary, have an Eye to my Bundle early, for it is much more valuable to me than when I left you. My Pocket having been pickt of my Book with 260 Dollars 15 or 25 Lottery Tickets and several Papers;<sup>2</sup> nor have I gained any Intelligence of what Things were sent in a Waggon from Boston the 25 Ultmo. A most unlucky Ride have I made back to this City.

I have Colo. R.H. Lee's Cloths in my Possession wth. something for Mr. Duer, Mr. Chase, Mr. Paca's Child, Mr. Walton & Mr. Duane. The Portmanteau of the latter will contain the whole & more.

You will mention this as I may not write in the present Dearth of Scriveners materials. I have a few Papers left in a Closet by Mr. S Adams and a few articles which Mr. Thompson might hereafter

want. Mr. Sprouts House is shut up or I would attempt to serve Mr. J Adams.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> That is, Sarah Yard.

<sup>2</sup> For additional information on the theft of Lovell's pocketbook, see Lovell to William Whipple, September 20, 1777.

## John Adams' Diary

Sept. 20. Saturday

Breakfasted at Mrs. J. B. Smiths. The old Gentleman, his Son Thomas the Loan Officer, were here, and Mrs. Smith's little Son and two Daughters. An elegant Break fast We had of fine Hyson, loaf Sugar, and Coffee &c.

Dined at Williams's, the Sign of the Green Tree. Drank Tea, with Mr. Thompson and his Lady at Mrs. Jacksons. Walked with Mr. Duane to General Dickinsons House, and took a Look at his Farm and Gardens, and his Greenhouse, which is a Scæne of Desolation. The floor of the Greenhouse is dug up by the Hessians, in Search for Money. The Orange, Lemon and Lime Trees are all dead, with the Leaves on. There is a spacious Ball Room, above stairs a drawing Room and a whispering Room. In another Apartment, a huge Crash of Glass Bottles, which the Hessians had broke I suppose. These are thy Tryumphs, mighty Britain. Mr. Law, Mr. Hancock, Mr. Thompson, Mr.                    were here. Spent the Evening at Williams's and slept again at Tuckers.

Mrs. Tucker has about 1600£ st. in some of the Funds in England, which she is in fear of loosing. She is accordingly, passionately wishing for Peace, and that the Battle was fought once for all &c. Says that, private Property will be plundered, where there is an Army whether of Friends or enemies. That if the two opposite Armys were to come here alternately ten times, she would stand by her Property untill she should be kill'd. If she must be a Beggar, it should be where she was known &c. This kind of Conversation shews plainly enough, how well she is pleased, with the State of Things.

MS (MHi). Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield), 2:264-65.

## Thomas Burke to Richard Caswell

Dr Sir

Burlington Sept. 20th. 1777

By the same Opportunity which this goes, you will I hope receive a Letter from me in which I gave you a pretty circumstantial account

of a very Important action which happened on the eleventh Instant on the Heights near Brandywine Creek.<sup>1</sup> Ever since we have been in Constant Expectation of another General Engagement, and not free from apprehensions from the Consequences. I for my own part would be at ease could I confide in the Abilities of our Superior General officers, for I had Occular proof that our Troops are very good.

The Question for adjournment from Philadelphia was dayly agitated in Congress, but always overruled. On the Night before last it received a compleat decision. Intelligence was received from the General Officer Commanding on Schuylkill that the Enemy were then attempting to cross and that they could not be prevented, and avising the Congress immediately to remove from the City. The movement was made not by a vote but by universal Consent, for every Member Consulted his own particular safety. I was wakened by a Servant about two oClock and tho' I lost no time in preparing to depart, yet I did not chuse to retreat with precipitation. I was not indeed fully persuaded of the Necessity of the measure, and not very Apprehensive for my personal Safety. About sunrise I crossed the Delaware and made my retreat hither where I shall wait the Issue of a Battle. It is now well known that the Alarm was groundless. No Enemy has yet passed, nor do's it appear that they will be able to pass.

I have the Honor to be, Sir your very obdrt Servt,

Tho Burke

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> See Burke to Caswell, September 17, 1777.

## James Lovell to William Whipple?

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>

Philadelphia 20 Sept. 1777.

My evil genius tempted me back into this Sodom after I had break-fasted yesterday morning with the other night fugitives at Bristol, I was sure the alarm was not sufficient, though given by the General's aid de camp Hamilton, who said his horse was shot, and one of his oarsmen, and that the enemy could throw a body of troops into the city before morning. I had left some linen in this place and expected some things by a waggon which left Boston the 25th ult, and I had a prospect of serving several gentlemen besides Col R. H. Lee whom I much esteem; therefore to this vile place I returned, and in the last evening had my pocket book stolen with 260 dollars and your tickets, with sundry other papers. I have gained a hint of the book and almanac which were found on a wharf below the Coffee House. It is in possession of a light horse man at Mount Holley in the Jersies, who picked it up in company with a man now in this place. I know not the number of your tickets nor any description, as they

were put up in the memorandum you gave me, and had never been out of my chest till yesterday morning. Forwarn all from purchasing as they will be checked on the books. Send me one of the papers in which you advertize, that I may have the description. The books are all sent away and will not be opened till they return to this City, and I suspect the Lottery will be ruined by this new interruption, if it would otherwise have gone on, but this suspicion is in confidence to yourself.

Commodore Hazelwood went down yesterday to attack some of the enemy's ships which fled from him. General Washington is on this side the Schuylkill. This looks as if there would be no pitched battle. I know not enough of circumstances to praise or absolutely condemn these manoeuvres.

Let me hear from you as soon as possible; be as favorable as you can about my want of care among pick-pockets and tell me how the best may be made of the affair. I have entreated by a notification to have the tickets and papers *privately* sent to Bradford's—if \$60 reward will not fetch back the money, I am plaguing myself and ruining my wife and children here.

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Although labeled by the copyist "James Lovell to John Langdon," this letter was probably written to William Whipple. Lovell refers below to the theft of "your tickets," and in letters of September 23 and 24 to Joseph Trumbull and to Robert Treat Paine he mentioned the theft of lottery tickets "belonging to Col. Whipple."

## John Adams' Diary

1777 Sept. 21. Sunday

It was a false alarm which occasioned our Flight from Philadelphia. Not a Soldier of Howes has crossed the Schuylkill. Washington has again crossed it, which I think is a very injudicious Manoeuvre. I think, his Army would have been best disposed on the West Side of the Schuylkill. If he had sent one Brigade of his regular Troops to have heald the Militia it would have been enough. With such a Disposition, he might have cutt to Pieces, Hows Army, in attempting to cross any of the Fords. How will not attempt it. He will wait for his Fleet in Delaware River. He will keep open his Line of Communication with Brunswick, and at last, by some Deception or other will slip unhurt into the City.

Burgoine has crossed Hudsons River, by which Gen. Gates thinks, he is determind at all Hazards to push for Albany, which G. Gates says he will do all in his Power to prevent him from reaching. But I confess I am anxious for the Event, for I fear he will deceive Gates, who seems to be acting the same timorous, defensive Part, which has involved us in so many Disasters. Oh, Heaven! grant Us one great



Soul! One leading Mind would extricate the best Cause, from that Ruin which seems to await it, for the Want of it.

We have as good a Cause, as ever was fought for. We have great Resources. The People are well tempered. One active masterly Capacity would bring order out of this Confusion and save this Country.

MS (MHi). Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield), 2:265.

## James Duane to Mary Duane

[. . .] 21t Sept 1777

I wrote to you this morning,<sup>1</sup> my dearest Polly from Trenton, but the Bearer did not receive the Letter. I presume it will be forwarded by the Post. I however met the Bearer at this place and unwilling to lose the opportunity sit down to mention again that Congress have adjourned to Lancaster to which place we are now on the Way. Our Removal from Philad. was owing to information that General Howe was crossing Schuylkill while General Washington was 15 miles in his Rear & that nothing could hinder his reaching Philad. that night if he pressed forward. However tho' this Intelligence was from one of the General's family<sup>2</sup> it was not well founded & we wish we had not left Philad. As matters now stand between the two Armies Genl Howe cannot reach Philad. without a Battle; the Event of which Congress had determined to wait in that City. I console myself with the Satisfaction in this long circuit of Seeing a great deal of the Country: tho' to speak the Truth I had rather see you the children & family than three Quarters of the globe. I bless God that I am in good Health & Spirits. May you & ours enjoy the same Blessing. Present my dutiful Regards, my Comps & my Blessing to our Parents, Friends & Children; and believe me most sincerely, My dearest Polly, Your ever faithful & affect. Husband,

Jas. Duane

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Hamilton.

## Charles Carroll of Carrollton to George Washington

Dear Sir,

Pott's Groves 22d Sept. 1777<sup>1</sup>

I would just suggest the propriety of sending Some active persons to Bristol & Trenton to impress Wagons to remove what continental

Stores are at those places & may be carried thither from Pha. in consequence of your orders to Colo. Hamilton. This measure is the more necessary as the order of Congress for removing these Stores is suspended<sup>2</sup> till their meeting at Lancaster which may not be for some days. Mr. Smith one of our Delagates being returned home I must proceed to Congress to keep up a representation from our State. I desire my compliments to the gentlemen in your family and wish Your Excellency health & success against our common enemy. I am with great esteem, yr. most obedt. hum. Servt.

Ch. Carroll of Carrollton

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup>This day Samuel Chase also wrote to Washington from "Potts Grove." "In this Place," Chase reported, "the Inhabitants are almost all Tories. I have endeavoured to obtain Information whether any Goods are stored here. Capt. Caldwell, who now lives here, believes that some Goods and Spirits, above 100 Hogsheads, are lodged in the Hands of one John Phillips. It is probable some Goods may be stored with the Potts's of this place. An immediate Search & Waggons ready to remove what may be found, will probably procure a considerable Supply. I have Reason to beleive a Quantity of Woollens are lodged near this place." Washington Papers, DLC.

<sup>2</sup>See *JCC*, 8:753. This September 18 resolve was directed at two resolves of Congress that had been passed on the 16th and 17th, for which see *JCC*, 8:748, 751.

## Delegates' Testimonial for the Bethlehem Moravians

Bethlehem September the 22d. 1777

Having here observed a humane and diligent attention to the sick and wounded, and a benevolent desire to make the necessary provision for the relief of the distressed, as far as the powers of the Bretheren enable them, We desire that all Continental Officers may refrain from disturbing the persons or property of the Moravians in Bethlehem, and particularly that they do not disturb or molest the Houses where the women are assembled.<sup>1</sup> Given under our hands at the time and place above mentioned,

Nathan Brownson	Richard Henry Lee
Nathl. Folsom	Cornl. Harnett
Richard Law	Henry Laurens
John Hancock	Benja Harrison
Samuel Adams	Jos. Jones
Elipht Dyer	John Adams
Jas. Duane	Henry Marchant
Wm. Duer	Wm Williams

Delegates to Congress

RC (PBMCA). Written by Richard Henry Lee and signed by Lee, the Adamses, Brownson, Duane, Duer, Dyer, Folsom, Hancock, Harnett, Harrison, Jones, Laurens, Law, Marchant, and Williams.

<sup>1</sup> This document was executed at the request of Moravian leader John Ettwein, who sought to prevent the military hospital, which had recently occupied several buildings in Bethlehem, from appropriating the women's residences. For Ettwein's account of the situation in Bethlehem during the fall of 1777, see Kenneth G. Hamilton, *John Ettwein and the Moravian Church during the Revolutionary Period* (Bethlehem, Pa.: Time Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 172-80.

## John Adams' Diary

1777. Tuesday. Sept. 23.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Okeley, Mr. Hassey and Mr. Edwine [Ettwein] came to see me. Mr. Edwine shewed Us, the Childrens Meeting at half after 8 o'Clock. Musick, consisting of an Organ and Singing in the German Language. Mr. Edwine gave a Discourse in German and then the same in English.

Mrs. Langley shewed Us the Society of Single Women. Then Mr. Edwine shewed Us the Water Works and the Manufactures. There are six Setts of Works in one Building. An Hemp Mill, an Oil Mill, a Mill to grind Bark for the Tanners.

Then the Fullers Mill, both of Cloth and Leather, the Dyers House, and the Shearers House. They raise a great deal of Madder. We walked among the Rows of Cherry Trees, with spacious orchards of Apple Trees on each Side of the Cherry Walk. The Society of Single Men have turned out, for the sick.

MS (MHi). Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield), 2:266.

<sup>1</sup> Commenting on his trip to Bethlehem, Adams made the following entry in his diary the preceding day: "Breakfasted at Ringolds in Quaker Town, dined at Shannons in Easton at the Forks, slept at Johnsons in Bethlehem." And on September 24 he recorded the following observations on a Moravian service he attended. "Fine Morning. We all went to Meeting last Evening, where Mr. Edwine gave the People a short discourse in German, and the Congregation sung and the organ playd. There were about 200 Women and as many Men. The Women sat together in one Body and the Men in another. The Women dressed all alike. The Womens Heads resembled a Garden of white Cabbage Heads." *Ibid.*, pp. 266-67.

## Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr.

Dear Papa,

Reading 23d Sept. 1777.

Mr. Smith being returned home and there no representation without me from Maryd. induced me to leave our army yesterday &

proceed to this place; tomorrow I shall set off for Lancaster, distant from this 30 miles. The Congress is to set at Lancaster. By Gen. Howes movements it appears to be his design to force Gen. Washington to a battle. This our prudent & worthy General will endeavour to avoid for some time till our army is recovered from their fatigue occasioned by the bad rainy weather & long night marches. Reinforcements too are expected from more quarters than one, and in three weeks, if General Washington can in the mean time avoid fighting, he will I make no doubt be at the head of a strong army. I am sorry to inform you that our discipline by no means answers my expectations, and till that grows better, we must not hope to overcome the enemy tho' much inferior in number. Numbers do not constitute the Strength of an army, unless they be well disciplined. They only serve to breed confusion & disorder. The General has by a late Resolve of Congress great, nay, almost unlimited powers conferred on him. I wish he may use them, unless he does, our affairs will never go well, but he is so humane & delicate that I fear the common cause will suffer from his humanity & delicacy of temper. However I believe he is determined to act with more vigor than heretofore. This man can not be too much admired & lamented. I have no doubts myself but that America will at last succeed. Her armies must be beat into discipline, & public calamity will place at the helm in the different States men who are capable of guiding it. The superficial, the plausible, the noisy, the men merely popular, will be removed, and men of business, of firmness, of resources will succeed them.

Our last accounts from Gates were pleasing. They were dated the 9th instant; he was then at the head of 8000 regulars advancing towards Burgoyne encamped near Fort Miller about 7 miles above Saratoga. Lincoln was in his rear with 5000 militia, and it was expected than Burgoyne would be obliged to retreat to the lakes, or fight on disadvantageous terms.

Opportunities of writing to you will now be Scarce at least for some time. I believe I shall remain in Congress till my time expires, unless I am sooner superseded by the assembly. When I get settled at Lancaster I shall send Johnny home for my winter cloaths & more shirts. My love to Molly & Mrs. Darnall. I am, Yr. affectionate Son,

Ch. Carroll of Carrollton

P.S. I have received your letter of the 8th instant. I would have you lend money as it comes in, on the security you mention, as you seem to think it good.



## Francis Lightfoot Lee to Edward Hand

Sir,

Reading Sept. 23d. 1777

Mr. McClure delivered your Letter for the board of war, to me here. Congress having been obliged by the movements of Genl. Howe to leave Philadelphia, will meet in a few days at Lancaster, when your Letter shall be laid before them, & an answer as soon as obtained shall be sent to you.<sup>1</sup> Our affairs at the northern Lakes are in a very prosperous situation. The campaign here is likely to be very warm. It will be necessary to keep a very watchful Eye over the Tories in your fort & neighbourhood. I am Yr. very hble Servt.

Francis Lightfoot Lee

RC (CtY).

<sup>1</sup> General Hand's letter is not in PCC, but it probably concerned the offensive he was currently planning against the Ohio Indians. Fearing that an all-out Indian war was imminent, Congress had appointed Hand commander at Fort Pitt in April 1777, shortly after promoting him to brigadier general. In his August 6 letter to the Board of War, Hand had reported increased Indian depredations and had called for additional troops, provisions, and rifles in order to secure a post in the Indian country prerequisite to attacking Indian settlements, but neither local militia nor Continental troops could be spared. When the necessary provisions and military forces could not be collected Hand reluctantly abandoned his planned offensive and asked in his December 24 letter to the Board of War to be recalled for service in the regular army, a request that was belatedly granted the following May. See *JCC*, 7:213, 252; PCC, item 159, fols. 415-17, 423-26; and George M. Waller, *American Revolution in the West* (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1976), pp. 34-41.

## James Lovell to Joseph Trumbull

My dear sir

Philada. 23d Sept. [1777]

You will have heard before this reaches you that Congress left this City at 3 o'clock in the morning of the 19th in consequence of Advice by Express from Coll. A. Hamilton Genl. Washington's Aid de Camp whose Horse was shot as he was passing the Schuylkill and one also of his Oarsmen was killed. I know not which Way Coll. Dyer & Co. steered after they crossed into the Jerseys. I was averse to going at first and after breakfasting at Bristol, Curiosity and some Interest brought me back here to dine the same day. It is said that 4,000 of the Enemy have now actually crossed at the Sweeds Ford. I shall know the Truth before the Post goes off Tomorrow. I have again heard very disagreeable accounts of the Necessity of the People in Boston. My Wife now on the Point of Confinement, with 7 Children and unable to get one Loaf of Bread per Day. I must pay £5 per cwt Waggonage from this Place which is the Price asked per cwt for One Commodity (Flour) in Boston. But that is not the worst. I was robbed of my

Pocket Book in the twinkling of an Eye last Friday Eveng. at the Coffee House, containing 260 Dollrs. With 15 or more Lottery Tickets, belonging to Col. Whipple, and some Papers of my own. My Loss of that money effectually joins with the exorbitant Prices in Boston to starve my Family. I must quit in consequence and seek Employ nearer home.

There is a fine Supply of Fireworks and a good Show of Spirit upon the Delaware. If there should not be an abominable deficiency of the latter on the country side Philadelphia will not be lost this tryal. But the Inhabitants cry "oh that Howe was the present 70 miles from his Ships in New England." There is an amazing Lethargy in these parts. Our Genl. has no Intelligence. Howe has the best Spies & Guides; that villainous Galloway wth. the Allens & several Sherriffs of Counties & 1 Surveyer.

Baltimore was relieved from Fear at 1 o'Clock the 18th the last of the Fleet then going down by the mouth of Patapsco. 20 or 30 Ships had gone down before. In Consequence Govr. Johnston would send more militia to join G. W——n and the Virginians also were to do the like, to be ready in case of any mishap. Commodore Hazlewood went down to burn some Ships the 19th at night but they fled. He has orders not to go into Broadwater which perhaps was the wish of the Enemy.<sup>1</sup>

RC (CtHi). In Lovell's hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> On September 24 Lovell wrote a similar letter to Elbridge Gerry, recounting the loss of his pocketbook and money and predicting a short stay for Congress in Lancaster. "By all I can find you will be so sick of Lancaster as to determine upon York speedily. . . . Mr. S. A. was little inclined to go to Lancaster; but I do not think he will quit before the Confedn. is gone through." Privately owned MS extracted in Burnett, *Letters*, 2:500n.2.

## Elbridge Gerry to George Washington

Sir

Lancaster Sepr. 24th 1777

In Consequence of your Letter of the 22d directed to the President or any Member of Congress,<sup>1</sup> I have conferred with William Henry Esqr. of this Place upon the most expeditious Method of collecting the Arms & accoutrements in the Hands of the Inhabitants here & he is of opinion that it may be accomplished by your Warrant to him grounded on the late Resolution of Congress for that & other Purposes.<sup>2</sup> As there is not a prospect of having a Congress or Board of War for several Days to give him Authority, & the Articles are immediately wanted, he has consented to proceed on the Business without Delay in Expectation that on the Receipt of this You will give him full Powers to justify his Conduct & date them the 22d, that the Time of his Transaction may comport with his Commission. With

Wishes of Success to your Excellency & the Cause in which You are engaged I remain sir very respectfully your most humble Sert,

E Gerry

RC (MH-H).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's September 22 letter has not been found, but for further information on his concern for collecting arms in the neighborhood of Lancaster, see Washington's September 26 and 27 letters to Gerry in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:270, 274-75; and Gerry to Washington, September 25, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> On September 17, Congress had given Washington broad authority to impress "all such provisions and other articles as may be necessary for the comfortable subsistence of the army under his command." *JCC*, 8:752.

## James Lovell to Robert Treat Paine

Sir

Philada. 24th Sepr. A.M. [1777]

Situated as I am, it would be very unpardonable in me not to give you some sort of history from this quarter.

About 3 o Clock last Friday morning the Members of Congress were warned by an express from one of Genl. Washington's Aids, Coll. Hamilton, to leave this city immediately as the enemy could throw a body of troops into it, some of our boats having fallen into their hands. The Gentleman wrote his letter just after his horse had been disabled, one of his oarsmen killed and another wounded in passing the river Schuylkill. Upon so strong an allarm, with the capture of Govr. McKinley fresh in memory, your Colleagues with their brethren of Congress took to the saddle without loss of time, governed by different fancies as to roads. Mr. S. Adams with others who boarded with me at Mrs. Cheseman's crossed into the Jersies by the middle ferry, as I have heard, to hastily for me to be of that party. I breakfasted at Bristol in a large Company. Mr. Hancock went from thence to Trenton and was soon followed by Mr. J. Adams. Mr. Geary intended to take another road to Reading, when a desire to ascertain the true state of affairs & a little unfinished business of my own, together with a greater quantity for others, brought me back to this place. Finding the city quietted in a degree I remained here to receive the letters expected by the Post from the eastward and to forward if necessary any intelligence of weight by expresses. Last evening we had a most sudden allarm that the enemy were on this side of the Schuylkill in full march towards this city, the militia flying before them. The Officer who commands advised me to remove; but with the Delaware so near at hand I chose to wait for daylight. I will not seal till I have collected the Reports of this morning.<sup>1</sup> In the mean time, however, I will carry you back a few days. I have it from Governour Johnston that the last of the enemy's fleet passed down by the mouth



of Patapsco River at 1 o Clock the 18th, twenty or thirty ships having passed down several days before. He judged Baltimore to be rendered so safe hereby that he intended to send a few additional companies of militia to join Gen. Washington. He also acquainted Govr. Henry to the movement of the ships that the Virginia militia then collected might march so as to be useful in case Howe should move but slowly or we should be unfortunate. Are you not astonished in New England at hearing that the enemy have marched 70 miles, that their ships are rounding the Cape of Cheseapeak to come the Delaware and that day after day passes without even a skirmish? I dare not be more minute as to the causes than only to tell you that the Philadelphians themselves say "it would not be so in New England, every stone wall would rattle about their ears." I hope, however, you will not give the least entertainment to despair of precious cause. Consider that Galloway, the Allens &c are conducting the enemy thro the most torified tracts assisted by Sherrifs of counties who know all the paths accurately, while our worthy Chief is intirely among foes, who will not or friends who dare not act the part of spies for him. Should the enemy be coming down on this side of Schuylkill from Sweed's ford or higher up the case will be altered, the roads known and the people somewhat faithful to him.

Commodore Hazlewood expected to have had a chance of burning some of the Enemy's Ships last Saturday morning. He fell down the River over night, but his object slipped away, perhaps with intend [intent] to draw him into broad water further down than Chester, but his orders are contrary. There seems to be no want either of fireworks or Manly spirit on the Delaware. Unless there should be a fatal deficiency of the latter on the country part Philadelphia will not go to ruin in this tryal of Sr William & My lord conjunctly.

I am chagrined at not hearing from Genl. Gates 13 days. In his last, he said that "perhaps few hours will discover whether Mr. Bourgoine will risque a Battle or slip back to Tyconderoga." That letter reached us in 3 days.

You will be affected by not receiving News papers from hence. The failure of them makes a general melancholy impression. We took early care to remove types as a valuable article. I can scarcely read yr eastern papers now, the types are so blount with use. Let the people know that the Papers are not stopped by Congress to "conceal bad news" as Tories used to propagate last winter.

Upon enquirey I find from Coll Hamilton that a small party of Hessians & Light Horse crossed about 18 miles up the River and there remain! Scandalous! The militia here seem to turn out only for the pay, without Intention to fight at all. Genl. Washington is at Monotamy watching the main body of the Enemy which lays at Potsgrove on the opposite bank of Schuylkill 35 miles from this. He will not expose his baggage & stores, laying in the neighbourhood of Read-



ing, to save this City from a Fright or even Destruction, finding the Inhabitants of the State do not think it worth struggling for.

The city post master slipped away last evening to Bristol, and I am suddenly called on by the postmaster of the army.

Peletiah Webster who intends to *remain here* urged me to take from him 200 Dollars, money belonging to our State. I did it without Authority, having been bro't to want it by a villainous Pickpocket last Friday evening, who took my Book wth. 260 Dollars and a Number of Lottery Tickets I think 15 belonging to Col. Whipple. My Family was in want before. This Blow will oblige me to quit, here, and return speedily to seek some mode of aiding them nearer home.

The Evening Post has nothing new; nor was there any thing interesting in a packet which I recd. 3 days ago from the Hague of June 11th.<sup>2</sup> Both French & Dutch seem to be waiting till we are free & independent by our exertions, and then they will dare to feel so themselves.

I am, with much Regard, Sir, Your Friend & humb Servt.

James Lovell

[P.S.] I believe the Chester Letter writer of Sepr. 12th has aggravated the Enemy's loss of General officers, otherwise his account is tollerable.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Lovell also wrote the following brief note to William Whipple this morning. "The City was almost evacuated last night upon an alarm that the enemy were at Chestnut Hill. I was warned off, but I trust to the Delaware in my rear. I have wrote largely to Boston. You will get their papers." Peter Force Collection, DLC.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a reference to Charles W. F. Dumas' letter of June 14, 1777, in which he reported: "Let us hear of a successful campaign, and your friends will show themselves, your partisans will multiply." Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:340-41.

## John Adams' Diary

1777. Thursday. Septr. 25.

Rode from Bethlehem through Allan Town, Yesterday, to a German Tavern, about 18 Miles from Reading. Rode this Morning to Reading, where We breakfasted, and heard for certain that Mr. Howes Army had crossed the Schuylkill. Coll. Hartley gave me an Account of the late Battle, between the Enemy and General Wayne.<sup>1</sup> Hartley thinks that the Place was improper for Battle, and that there ought to have been a Retreat.

MS (MHi). Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield), 2:267.

<sup>1</sup> Adams is referring to the surprise night attack and defeat of Gen. Anthony Wayne's force at Paoli on September 20.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton  
to Charles Carroll, Sr.

Dr. Father

Lancaster 25th Sepr. 1777.

I arrived here yesterday. I believe we shall make up a Congress tomorrow. I expect the Enemy took possession of Pha. yesterday evening or this morning. If the garrison at the fort will hold out a few day perhaps Mr. Howe may repent his going into Pha. General Washington is assembling & collecting troops from all sides. His army is much broken down with their late marches but a few days rest I hope will revive their strength & spirits. Gen. Washington crossed the Schuylkill with a full intention of attacking the enemy but the great rain which fell last Wednesday prevented the battle. Our amunition got so much damaged that our army was obliged to retire to strong grounds to get fresh ammunition.

I am your affectionate Son, Ch. Carroll of Carrollton

[P.S.] A Post soon will be established between this & Baltimore town when our correspondence will be more regular & frequent.

RC (MdHi).

Samuel Chase to Thomas Johnson

My Dear Sir,

Lancaster Sepr. 25. 1777.

I dropt You a Line from Reading the Day before yesterday,<sup>1</sup> I there received your Letter of the 16th. I write this by an Express Carrying orders to the Virginia Militia. I expect We shall make up a Congress before Sunday, & then I expect a regular Conveyance will be established weekly to Baltimore.

23rd Sepr. 1777

"The Enemy, by a variety of perplexing Manouvres, thro a Country from which I cod. not derive the least Intelligence, being to a Man disaffected, contrived to pass the Schuylkill last Night, at the flatland & other fords in the Neighbourhood of it. They marched immediately towards Philada & I imagine their advanced parties will be near that City to Night. They had so far got the Start before I reced certain Intelligence that any considerable Number had crossed, that I found it in vain to think of overtaking their Rear with Troops harrassed as ours had been with constant Marching since the Battle of Brandewyne, & therefore concluded by the advice of all the General officers to march from this place (near Potts Grove) tomorrow Morning towards Philadelphia, & on the Way endeavor to form a Junction with the Continental Troops under General McDougal from Peekskill & the Jersey Militia under Genl. Dickinson, both of whom are,

I hope, on this Side the Delaware. I am also obliged to wait for Genls. Wayne & Smallwood who were left upon the other Side of the Schuylkill in Hopes of falling upon the Enemy's Rear, but they have eluded them as well as Us." This Extract from G.W. to Congress.<sup>2</sup>

We hear the Enemies advanced parties entered the City yesterday Evening.

About 1000 of G. Washington's army are without Shoes & Stockings. About 500 of Genl. Waynes Division lost theirs & their Blankets in the late shameful Surprise. We lost 272 dead, prisoners, wounded & missing in that affair. Our Militia behaved very ill, many of them were run quite off with their Arms. Our officers behaved remarkably well. Would it not be<sup>3</sup> proper to take Measures to carry them back?

One Higginson, who once lived at Annapolis, went to Saml. & thence run away, has been concerned in a Conspiracy at fort Pitt, he is well known to Whetcroft, Quynn. It is highly expedient that he be secured as soon as possible. Genl. Hand has sent after him, but it is probable he will get to the Eastern Shore.

The president is not arrived, he will be here this Evening. He has a Letter from Genl. Gates—Nothing important in that Quarter. He has about 7000 & Lincoln about 5000. I hope they will give a good account of Mr. Burgoyne.

If possible I am desirous our assembly shod. meet. It is absolutely necessary to take some Measures to procure a Supply of Military Stores. If they meet I will instantly attend.

My Compliments to the Gentlemen<sup>4</sup> of the council. Adieu, your affectionate and obedient servant,

Saml Chase

RC (PHi). RC (MdFreHi). Tr (MdHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:257–58.

<sup>3</sup> The fragment of the RC at PHi ends at this point.

<sup>4</sup> The remainder of this letter is taken from the Tr.

## Elbridge Gerry to George Washington

Sir

Lancaster Sepr 25th 1777 3oClock P.M.

I wrote You a Line Yesterday desiring You to impower Mr. Henry of this Place to collect the Fire Arms wanted for the Virginia Troops on their March to the Camp, since which your Letter of the 23d is received, desiring that a Number of Blankets & Shoes may be also collected.<sup>1</sup> I have seen Mr. Henry within this half Hour, & he informs me that he has collected already about 250 Arms, & shall be able to obtain about as many more. He also says that 300 pair Shoes went off this Morning to General Wayne, & that he will proceed in collecting as many pair of shoes, & Blankets, as can be procured or with

propriety be taken from the Inhabitants of the Town, & Farmers in the Neighbourhood thereof. You will therefore be pleased to enlarge &c the Powers proposed to be given by your Excellency to Mr. Henry, and authorize him to collect the Articles last mentioned.<sup>2</sup>

Colo R H Lee is present, & has just directed a Letter to the Commandg Officer of the Militia at Frederick Town in Maryland ordering on all the Militia that are armed & 500 of those that are unarmed to be supplied in this Place. I have the Honor to be Sir with much Esteem your Excellency's very hum serv. E Gerry

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's September 23 letter to President Hancock was read in Congress on September 27. *JCC*, 8:755; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:257-60. See also Gerry to Washington, September 24, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> In a September 27 reply to Gerry, Washington repeated his September 25 demurer about seizing the arms of private citizens, but urged that the "collection of Blankets and shoes . . . cannot be carried to too great an extent." Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:274-75.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dr Sir

Lancaster 25 Sept. 1777

Congress have been Obliged to leave Philadelphia and it is Supposed Genl. Howe is now in possession of it, altho' every effort in Genl. Washingtons Power has been made use of to prevent it. Perhaps he may not remain long there in Security. Genl. Gates's Army is very Strong to the Northward and a Battle with Burgoin is Daily expected, should we be successful in that Quarter it will in some Measure Compensate for the loss of this great City. The Congress are not yet met here several of the Members not being arrived, as soon as they do meet, & an oppertunity offers, I shall write you again more fully. Make my Compliments to Mr. Hooper, Maclain & all friends. I shall in a few days do myself the pleasure to write to them. Cap Medici is just setting off. I have not time to enlarge. With esteem I am, Dr Sir, Your friend & obed Servt. Cornl. Harnett

RC (PHi). Endorsed: "Cornelius Harnetts Letter recd 29th Octo 1777."

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir

Lancaster 26 September 1777

I Arriv'd last Eveng at this place where I was honour'd with your Letter of 23d Inst. which I shall lay before Congress as soon as the whole of the Members arrive here which I Expect will be this Day.



The Inclos'd Letters for Commodore Hazelwood & Capt. Alexander, the Marine Committee judg'd best to forward, at least to induce them to Exert themselves to the last, they are left open for your perusal after which you will please to Seal and Send them forward by such Rout as you shall Determine the properest.

I am, Sir, Your Excellency's Most Obedt huml Servt.

John Hancock Presidt

RC (DLC).

## Marine Committee to Charles Alexander

Sir<sup>1</sup>

Lancaster Septemr. 26th 1777

As the future safety of Philadelphia and the public good so greatly depend upon preventing the enemies Fleet from getting up to Town and succoring the Army, you are desired to co-operate in the most full and freindly manner with the Other Land and Sea forces both of the Continental and the state of Pennsylvania in effecting this valuable purpose. It is expected that you exert every art that valour, vigilance and address can suggest to you, as well as to prevent the enemy from Philadelphia possessing themselves of the Fort, as to keep the British Fleet from getting up. If there should be a probability of either provisions or ammunition failing you, let timely care be taken to get supplied from General Washington who with his Army will be in the neighbourhood of Philadelphia above the City. If the Fort and the passage of the River is bravely and properly defended, the possession of Philada will probably turn out to be the ruin of the British Army.

Your established reputation for valour makes it unnecessary to say that brave minds should never despair, and that every thing is to be hazarded where the public good require it. You and the brave American forces with you, will therefore keep the defences on the River Delaware to the last extremity. But, if every resource of valour and skill should fail you, and it becomes absolutely impossible to hold out any longer, you are then to push with the Continental Vessels as far as they can swim up the River, and having defended them there as long as possible, they must all be destroyed rather than suffer them to fall into the enemies hands. If it should be found that Fort Mifflin must be given up, you are then to use your utmost endeavours to bring off the garrison and convoy the Troops to a place of safety. Congress has already determined that in defending the Delaware the Continental Marine Officers shall be under command of the Commodore of this State, and you are accordingly to observe and pay due regard to that Resolve.

Wishing you the most honourable success, We are sir, Your hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book). Addressed: "Charles Alexander Esqr. or the officer commanding the Continental Vessels in the Delaware."

<sup>1</sup> As commander of the Continental frigate *Delaware*, Alexander was the ranking Continental naval officer on the Delaware River. However, on the 27th, while attempting to disrupt British fortification activities along the Philadelphia riverfront, the *Delaware* ran aground. After incurring damage she was surrendered and Alexander taken prisoner. See Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, pp. 123-25.

## Marine Committee to John Hazelwood

Sir<sup>1</sup> Lancaster 26th September 1777

It being of great importance to the future safety of Philadelphia, and to the Public good that the defences on the River Delaware should not fall into the enemies hands, or their fleet be suffered to get up to the City, orders are this day sent to the Commander of the Continental armed Vessels to be subordinate to your Command in defending the River.

We have no doubt but that your joint and vigourous efforts will be employed to defend the passage of the River to the last extreimity and if at last it must be given up, it is expected that you will assist in removing the Troops from Fort Mifflin to a place of safety. Your knowledge of the River will best enable you to determine where it may be necessary to sink vessels or other obstructions in Order to supply the vacancies between the Cheveaux de frize already sunk, and to prevent the enemy from bringing many Vessels to bear against the Fort. Such Vessels as are necessary for the above purpose you are hereby authorized to take and supply.

We wish you success and are Sir, Your humble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> On September 6 John Hazelwood (1726-1800), commodore of the Pennsylvania Navy, had been appointed commander of all Pennsylvania naval forces. *DAB*; and *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 5:594.

## Charles Carroll of Carrollton to George Washington

Dear Sir, Lancaster 27th Sepr. 1777.

I have had some conversation with Mr. Peters Secretary to our board who informs me that in the month of June last 1000 tin cartridges boxes were sent to the army and delivered to a Captain

French. Mr. Peters moreover informs me that to his certain knowledge several of these cartridges boxes were converted by the soldiers into canteens & by some officers into shaving boxes. Commissary Flowers also acquainted me that there are now at Carlisle upwards of 2000 tin cartridges boxes: if these are wanted in the army they may be immediately sent for.

I am sorry to observe that two officers in high command in our army are said to be much addicted to liquor: what trust, what confidence can be reposed in such men? They may disconcert the wisest & best laid plans: such men ought to be removed from their command & the army, for their example, besides the mischief which may be occasioned by a clouded & muddled brain, will have a pernicious influence on others: but how are they to be removed from their command?<sup>1</sup> I could wish to know your Excellencys Sentiments on this Subject. The interest of the best & most glorious cause ought not to be sacrificed to a false delicacy: these are not times to put into competition the interests of a few with those of a great community.

Nothing but severe punishments will, in my opinion, make the Commissaries & quartermasters attentive to their duty: your Excellency has the power, and I hope will not want the will to punish such as deserve punishment. I hope your Excellency will excuse the freedom of this Letter; my Zeal for our country or my wishes for your Success have impelled me to write thus freely on a subject which claims all your attention, the reformation of the army & of the abuses prevalent in the two important departments of the Quarter Master & Commissary General. I am with much esteem, Yr. Excellencys most obedt. hum. Servt. Ch. Carroll Carrollton

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Carroll probably had in mind Maj. Gens. William Alexander and Adam Stephen. Stephen was dismissed from the service, for drunkenness and un-officerlike conduct at the battle of Germantown, on November 20, 1777. See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:89.

## Cornelius Harnett to Richard Caswell

Sir

Lancaster Sepr. 27. 1777

I did myself the Honor of writing Your Excellency a few days ago from Philadelphia, since which Congress have been obliged to Decamp, Genl. Howe having by many different Maneouvers got between Our Army & the City, & can when he pleases take possession of it. But it seems his intention is to Come to another Battle with Our Army first. Genl. Washington will in a day or two be reinforced with 1500 Regulars under Genl. McDugal from Peekskiln & 2000 Virginians & we hope will be able to Circumvent Howes schemes. Should he meet with a severe Check now, his Scituation will be rendered uneasy to



Lancaster, Pennsylvania



him, if he is not entirely ruined. Genl. Gates' army to the Northward is very Strong & we have every reason hourly to expect good news from that Quarter. It is thought Genl Burgoyne must fight or retire either of which must put an End for some time to further Hostilities in that Quarter we hope. Congress intends to proceed to business this day. I can send Your Excellency no news papers as yet. Messrs. Burk & Penn are neither of them Arrived. I expect them today. I am with great regard, Your Excellencys Most Obed huml Servt.

Cornl. Harnett

RC (NN).

## Eliphalet Dyer to Joseph Trumbull

Dear Sir

Lancaster Septr. the 28th 1777

I received yours of the 8th Instant on the road to this place & of the 16th by Stores yesterday. Am rejoiced to hear Mrs Dyer is in a fair way of recovery & the rest of my family well. Since my last wherein I Informed you of the Situation of the two Armies this way & of the Battle at Brandywine & the hopes we then entertained that the Enemy could never penetrate the Country & possess themselves of the *(great)* Capital of this State yet all this they have done & without any loss or may say almost without a gun being fired at them since instead of the Country rising for their defence & surrounding & harassing the Enemy in every Movement the Militia which were Collected have principally run of [f] & left the Genl with his Continental forces to shirk for himself. This State is torn to peices by factions in Government, Quaker, Dunker, Milese & Moravians in religion whose principles not only prevent them from fighting but Induces them to disaffect others & to give all possible Aid to the Enemy (Moravians excepted). We had large Stores at Reading and at many places back in the Country, at one time Genl Howe would seem to aim at them, & then again make a sudden trek toward the City, tho it would appear afterward to be only feints & by parties while his main body lay still & at rest. These appearances put Genl Washington Continually on the March sometimes one way & sometimes another to Counteract his designs by which his Troops become fatigued & wore out & dispirited. How seems to be among his friends favoured with every advantageous Intelligence & supplied with every Necessary & Conveniencie both of Provisson & Carriage while Genl Washington being in the midst of his Enemies & those disaffected to the Cause was deficient in both. Twice he determined to give the Enemy Battle but Unhappily dissappointed in both the first by an excessive rain, which entirely wet & ruined all the Cartridges of his Army with which they were provided in order to Attack the Enemy by break of day, which not only prevented the proposed Attack but oblidged him to march

his whole Army back into the Country 15 or 16 miles from the Enemy to recruit his Arms & Amunition. That left the Enemy so far advanced between him & the City & nothing but the difficulty of passing the Schuylkill (then raised by the rains) prevented their Marching directly into the City & by an express who came into the City about one oClock on the morning of Fryday the 19th Instant Informing the Enemy had passed the Schuylkill & was then on their full March for the City, Noticing the Congress Members Immediately to leave the City, & that they had not a minute to spare tho this proved a mistake You may depend upon it we were soon on the Wing & made our flight with all speed to Trenton where we arrived early that day. From Thence we journeyd to Bethlem & through Reading to Lancaster to which place we had agreed<sup>1</sup> to adjourn Congress when there should be Need, but we only met there to Adjourn to this place where we Open Congress this day. We thought it not best at this time to remove out of this State least in this Critical Situation of affairs there should be a total defection of this State. The Enemy are now in possession of their Capital which they entered on Fryday last with a party of about 15 hundred & with their main body are fortifying on the heights near German Town. Genll Washington is now reinforced with McDougles Brigade from the Peekskills, by some Jersey Militia with about 2000 from Maryland & about the same Number from Virginia which last are now come forward on the road & others passing thro this place to join him. He must now have a large Army but hast lost all the Advantages he has had Against the Enemy in their March, but yet are not without hopes that he may still dislodge the Enemy, before their fleet arrives up the river. We have a large Number of row gallies, fire ships &c in the river to give them at least one blast when they come. I receivd a letter from Benjn with yours in which he wrote to me to send him a quantity of drugs from Philadelphia but it was not received till after I left the City & the Enemy were in possession. Otherwise if he had sent to me some time agoe he might have been supplied with all the Articles he sent for. He must blame himself for his delay. I hear Nothing from Coll Thos. His Regiment I suppose is now with Genll Washington & Conclude he has or will soon join them. My sincere affection to my Wife & Children at home & proper regards to Friends and Am sincerely, Your,

Elipht Dyer

[P.S.] Mr. Law & Coll Williams are with me & well.

Your Express was Necessarily detained by the Movements of Congress.

We shall Immediately enter upon the Confederation, taxation & if possible to retrieve the sinking State of our Currency.

Congress have resolved that the Intrest on the loan office Certificates past & future to be paid by bills of Excge drawn on our Commisrs in France at 6 per Cent.<sup>2</sup>

I have sent home by your express a few useless & worn out Cloathing.

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> Dyer wrote the remainder of the letter on the verso of the sheet, where he penned in the top left margin: "York Town: October 1st." Although the physical appearance of the manuscript offers no clues as to precisely where he resumed writing on October 1, he doubtless wrote the last clause of this sentence and the rest of the letter on that date.

<sup>2</sup> See the resolves of September 9 and 10 in *JCC*, 8:724-26, 730-31.

## Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr.

Dr Papa,

York 29th Sept. 1777

The Congress not thinking themselves secure from light parties of the Enemy at Lancaster have adjourned to this place where it will probably remain the whole winter. In the course of a few days a regular post will be established between this & Baltimore & the Eastward, when I hope our correspondence will be more regular than it has been. I have written several letters to you but have recd. but one from you since I left home. I shall write again in a few days for some winter cloaths for myself & Servant & money. I shall send the list of what I want to Molly to whom I desire my love as also to her Mama. Gen. Washington's army is gathering strength & recovering from its late fatigues. Howe had not got into Pha. last Thursday: his army lay between German Town & the city. I do not believe he will trust himself in Pha. before another battle is fought. His shipping can not come up till the fort is taken & the cheveaux de frise raised.

The last letter from Gates was dated the 15th instant. Burgoyne was on the west side of North river: Lincoln in his rear with 5000 on the east side: Gates in the West side, but had 13 bridges to build before he could get at Burgoyne, or Burgoyne at him, so that no action could happen between them before the 25th of the month or thereabouts. If our northern army can be kept together, I think with prudent management Burgoyne will find it equal difficult to retreat or advance. The State of Pena. is either disaffected, or its Governt. So weak that it is become rather a burthen than strength to the Union. Unless we finish this campaign successfully, I fear we shall not be able to support the expence of another. I wish you a long enjoyt. of your health & am Yr. affec. Son,<sup>1</sup>

C.C. of Carrollton

RC (MdHi).

<sup>1</sup> Carroll wrote to his father again the following day to report the results of the battle of Freeman's Farm between Generals Gates and Burgoyne on September 19, news of which had just been delivered to Congress by Gates' aide Maj. Robert Troup. Carroll Papers, MdHi.



## John Adams to Abigail Adams

York Town Pensylvania,  
 Sepr. 30. 1777 Tuesday

My best Friend

It is now a long Time, since I had an Opportunity of writing to you, and I fear you have suffered unnecessary Anxiety on my Account. In the Morning of the 19th Inst., the Congress were allarmed, in their Beds, by a Letter from Mr. Hamilton one of General Washingtons Family, that the Enemy were in Possession of the Ford over the Schuylkill, and the Boats, so that they had it in their Power to be in Philadelphia, before Morning. The Papers of Congress, belonging to the Secretary's Office, the War Office, the Treasury Office, &c. were before sent to Bristol. The President, and all the other Gentlemen were gone that Road, so I followed, with my Friend Mr. Merchant of Rhode Island, to Trenton in the Jersies. We stayed at Trenton, untill the 21 when We set off, to Easton upon the Forks of Delaware. From Easton We went to Bethlehem, from thence to Reading, from thence to Lancaster, and from thence to this Town, which is about a dozen Miles over the Susquehannah River. Here Congress is to sit.

In order to convey the Papers, with safety, which are of more Importance than all the Members, We were induced to take this Circuit, which is near 180 Miles, whereas this Town by the directest Road is not more than 88 Miles from Philadelphia. This Tour has given me an Opportunity of seeing many Parts of this Country, which I never saw before.

This Morning Major Throop arrived here with a large Packett from General Gates, containing very agreable Intelligence,<sup>1</sup> which I need not repeat, as you have much earlier Intelligence from that Part than We have.

I wish Affairs here wore as pleasing an Aspect. But alas they do not.

I shall avoid every Thing like History, and make no Reflections.

However, General Washington is in a Condition tolerably respectable, and the Militia are now turning out, from Virginia, Maryland and Pensilvania, in small Numbers. All the Apology that can be made, for this Part of the World is that Mr. Howes march from Elke to Philadelphia, was thro the very Regions of Passive obedience. The whole Country thro which he passed, is inhabited by Quakers. There is not such another Body of Quakers in all America, perhaps not in all the World.

I am still of Opinion that Philadelphia will be no Loss to Us.

I am very comfortably situated, here, in the House of General Roberdeau, whose Hospitality has taken in Mr. S[amuel] A[dams], Mr. G[erry] and me. My Health is as good as common, and I assure you my Spirits not the worse for the Loss of Philadelphia.

Biddle in the Continental Frigate at S. Carolina has made a noble Cruise and taken four very valuable W.I. Prizes.



Continue to write me by the Post, and I shall pay my Debts.

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:349-50.

<sup>1</sup> The packet of letters brought by Maj. Robert Troup included Gen. Horatio Gates' September 22 letter containing news of the battle at Freeman's Farm. See *JCC*, 8:756-57.

## Samuel Chase to Thomas Johnson

Dr Sir,

York. Septr. 30 1777, Tuesday Noon

Since Writing to You this Morning<sup>1</sup> Congress have received Letters from Genl. Gates, the same in Substance & almost in the words of Wilkinsons Letter. Inclosed is the List of our Loss. Gates has above 7000 effective Rank & file, above 2,000 Militia are marching to reinforce him. Adieu, Y[our]s,

S Chase

RC (MdHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir,

York Town in Pennsylvania Sepr. 30th. 1777.

Since my departure from Philadelphia, I have to acknowledge the receipt of your favrs. to 23d Inst. I met the Congress on Saturday last at Lancaster, & upon consultation it was judged most prudent to adjourn to this place, where we now are & where we can deliberate & prosecute business without interruption, & where your dispatches will meet us.

I have just now recieved by general Gates's Aid de Camp (Major Troup) sundry Letters, Copies of which I have the honour to inclose you, by which it appears that our affairs in the northern department wear a favourable aspect, and I hope soon to transmit you an Account of an issue to the contest in that quarter.

I wish soon to receive the most pleasing accounts from you, we are in daily expectation of agreeable tidings, & that Genl. Howe is totally reduced.

I beg leave to refer you to the inclosed papers, and am with the utmost respect & esteem, Sir, your most Obedt. & very hble Servt.

John Hancock Presidt

[P.S.] Inclos'd I send you a South Carolina Paper, by which you will See the Success Capt Biddle in the Frigate Randolph has met, which when you have perus'd, I ask the favr. you will please to order to be Deliver'd to Coll. Pinkney of South Carolina, who is at Camp, &

whose the paper is, I requested it of the South Carolina delegates first to be sent to you.

RC (DLC). In a clerical hand, with signature and postscript by Hancock.

## Cornelius Harnett to Richard Caswell

Dear Sir. York Town Pennsylvania Sept 30. 1777

I take the liberty to inform your Excellency that Congress have at last fixed themselves in this Town, where they in all probability will remain for some time. An express has been this day received from Genl Gates, who informs Congress of an action which happened on the 19th Instant, within three miles of Stillwater, between our army under his command and that of the Enemy under Genl Burguoin. It continued several hours, but night put a stop to it. Both armies retreated to their Encampments leaving the field to be again disputed on another day. The left wing of our Army was only engaged against the whole of the British and most of the Foreign Troops. A heavy and brisk fire was kept up on both sides, we had 2 Lieut Colls, 3 Captains, 3 Subs, 2 Sergeants, 2 drummers and phifers, and 51 rank & file killed. Several officers and 180 odd wounded. The Enemy's loss was very considerable supposed to be at least 1200 killed and wounded. It is said by Prisoners and Deserters that Genl Burguoin received a wound in his shoulder. His situation is so very critical that we have the most sanguine expectation of hearing in a few days of his meeting with a total defeat. Genl Lincoln has taken by a party sent from his army 200 Battallions [*i.e.* Batteaux] on lake George and Lake Champlaine, upwards of 200 prisoners with their arms, and released 100 of our men who were prisoners in that Quarter, and it is supposed a successful attack will be made on Ticonderoga very soon. I wish I had it in my power to give your Excellency as pleasing an account of our affairs in this Quarter, Genl Howe is, or can be in possession of Philadelphia when he pleases. Genl Washington's army are upon Schuylkill, betwixt Reading & Philadelphia, a reinforcement of 1500 Regulars under Genl. McDugal has joined him, and upwards of 2000 Virginians are on their march for the same purpose. And it is believed Genl Washington will march to Philadelphia, or near it, and that another general Battle will be fought in a few days. The Enemy are not as yet in possession of the River. Our Troops and armed Vessels intend to defend the Fort to the last extremity. A firing was heard on Saturday last, which continued some hours, supposed to be between some of the Enemy's ships and the Fort. The particulars have not as yet been received by Congress. I shall be very happy to receive a line from you as often as you can find leisure.

Messrs Burke & Penn are not yet arrived, but I expect them every hour. I am with great respect, Your Excellency's most Obt huml Servt.  
Cornl Harnett

Tr (Nc-Ar).

## Joseph Jones to George Washington

Dr. Sr.

York, 30th Sept. 1777.

I have your Phaeton here though I was obliged to send for it after I left Philadelphia being put to the rout the night I recd your Letter.<sup>1</sup> The bolt that fastens the pole & part of the long reins were lost, some brass nails also gone, and the lining much dirtied and in some places torn. I will get these little matters repaired and have the carriage and Harness kept clean and in as good order as I can, which is the least I can do for the use, though I woud. much rather buy it if you are not determined agt. selling, and submit the price to yourself or our Friend Colo. Harrison, who may view it and pay the Cash Upon demand to your Order. The Harness I observe is not matched, though the difference is not very striking. Whether this happened at Philadelphia since you left it there, or before You can judge. We have met upon the road many Companies of Virga. Militia and more are coming, though I am informed numbers are gone back, in consequence of your Letter respecting those unarmed.<sup>2</sup> I observe they are in general bare of cloathing, wch if possible shod. be furnished them, and their stay at Camp made as comfortable as circumstances will admit, that when they return Home they may not go disgusted spreading evil reports, greatly to the prejudice of the recruiting service and the cause in general. These Men come far to support the Rights and property of an invaded State, that makes little or no exertions in its own defence, but on the contrary afford every succour and support to the Enemy, and rather than they shod. want necessities or any other part of the Army at this and the approaching inclement season, I woud. not scruple to take all such necessities from the disaffected where ever found. Our Friends are striped by our Enemies wherever they go, and our Foes freely furnish them what they want. What the last have left usefull to the Army I woud. take, and where the first are so exposed to the Enemy as that what necessities they have must unavoidably fall into their hands, I woud. demand a surrender of them, paying the value or giving Certificates, assigning the reason of proceeding. The Enemy subsist their Army at our Expence, drawing supplies from around them as they pass. I Wod. subsist our Army from around it as far as possible, and in the rout of the Enemy. These are my private sentiments which I communicate without reserve, to be regarded or disregarded by you as you shall judge best. I own to you this Conduct woud. often hurt my feelings,

as I am satisfied in many instances it must yours but where I was satisfied the public good woud. result from the measure, I shod. endeavour to stifle those emotions of Humanity and Tenderness for individual distress, which in different circumstances woud. claim my attention and benevolence. In times like the present and in situations like ours, Rigour to internal Foes is absolutely necessary, and I think has been too long delayed. To Friends I woud afford every possible support and protection, to Tories and equivocal Characters I woud. yield the measure meeted by the Enemy to our Friends. I think this is the general Sentiment of our Body, and of almost every Whig I converse with. How far you can prevail on yourself to carry them into execution your own feelings must determine. The right of retaliation cannot be disputed, and it is equally just and wise to benefit ourselves of those necessities wch. it is probable shod. we neglect to do so, may advantage the Enemy. In pursuing this line individuals may suffer hardship, but it is a sacrifice our friend shod. willingly make in the general good. Pray excuse these loose thoughts, I offer them with freedom. You are equally free to disregard them. Success and happiness attend you.

Yr. affect Servt.

Jos. Jones

[P.S.] Gibsons Battalion came in today. They are but thin.

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's September 17 letter, in which he declined Jones' offer to buy his carriage but urged his fellow Virginian to use it, is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:232–33. See also Jones to Washington, September 14, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> In a September 27 letter to the commanding officer of Virginia militia at Lancaster, Washington ordered one thousand of those "best Armed and equipped for the Season" to join his army immediately and suggested that those without arms might return home. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:273–74.

In an attempt to help a Virginia militia battalion secure needed arms, Richard Henry Lee sent this brief request from "Susquehannah" on the 28th to William Henry, deputy commissary and treasurer of Lancaster County, Pa.: "This will be delivered you by Major Picket of the Virginia Militia, many of whose men are unarmed and must be supplied out of the 500 stand that you proposed to collect. As these are good men, they ought to have good arms, and I entreat you Sir to furnish them, if in your power, to the satisfaction of Major Picket." *PMHB* 11 (1887): 502. Some arms must have been supplied because by Washington's general orders of October 8 William Pickett's battalion was attached to Gen. William Woodford's brigade. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:341.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear Son<sup>1</sup>

York Town, 30 Septm 1777

I thank you for your late favors under the 24th & 26th & wait for one in return to a Letter which I sent from Reading<sup>2</sup> by the hand of Colonel Hartley at whose House I have apartments & am now writing.

Perfectly satisfied that you will be guardian of the better parts,



your Honour & reputation, I am the more anxious to take care of what I know you too much neglect, the frame of your admirable Clockwork. If the former is battered by rude blasts & hard thumps the more valuable machinery will suffer mutual decay. You have not clothing enough to keep you warm, how will [you] be able to speak your thoughts with chattering teeth or to write them with nerves benumbed or frozen. I was going to send James with the Cloth scarlet & blue to put into your hands from an opinion that you might in the Army procure a taylor to make up a comfortable Hat or Cloak & some other necessary apparel but from the uncertainty of the fact as to the taylor as well as of the station of your encampment I prefer the present opportunity of an express from Mr. Hancock to consult you. Let me know any thing & every thing you want, the Cloak will be absolutely necessary, you may direct the fashion & the garment shall be immediately made, a little too scant for mine will fit your body. How is your Stock of Linen Stockings &c &c. If I were to listen to the sly whispers & inuendo of some people who are elate from eastern intelligence, we are to expect nothing more from your General this Winter but encampment & casual skirmishes, no impressions are made on my mind by such ungenerous hints, but apart from what may be done in Arms, the Winters cold in this Climate is certain & not to be fenced by the Sword, warm clothing in three weeks time will be necessary & to this end I have filled a Page. Let me have a proper answer.

Congress have been hurried from place to place & no business done for many days past. I hope we shall begin anew tomorrow & be permitted to deliberate without further interruption, & founded on the success of General Washington's steps. We know no more here of your situation, your numbers or plan than the people in Charles Town do, but from the numbers of Officers seen every where in Taverns Men conclude that you are in a ragged condition. Two highland deserters came here last Night from Wilmington. Their report induces many to believe that you have neglected that Post of the Enemy which might have been easily taken. The deserters intimated that apprehensions of an attack were general before they left the place. When please God we meet we shall have subjects for an hours conversation & employment enough to fan away the chaff of reports.

If James had waited on you part of his business would have been to deliver the four or five Letters which will now accompany this, three I may say four of them from your Wife,<sup>3</sup> I send her address to me with one for you enclosed exactly in the state I received it, the Seal of mine excepted, I presume the putting an open Letter for you under my Cover was an innocent stratagem of the Dear Girl & a modest mode of requesting me to second her efforts, which I mean to comply with most earnestly. What shall we do in this affecting & important circumstance? 'Tis a circumstance in which also your Honour

& reputation are deeply Interested, be your present views & feelings what they may.

To the Letters above mentioned I add one from Harry.<sup>4</sup> On his Account I likewise wish to see you, I would wish now to remove him from England to a foreign School perhaps a military Academy, or if practicable to America.

From Charles Town I have Letters scarcely a month old, as late as 1st September, but have learnt nothing extraordinary, for nothing is so in the line of some Mens conduct.

General Gadsden moved by means of the Chief Justice in August the House of Assembly to enquire into the nature of General Howe's appointment. The House by a large majority rejected the proposition. The humble General immediately stripped off the Bauble as he call'd it, the Ribband, in the House, tendered his Commission to G H, who politely declines to receive it abruptly. He threw it as politely into the General's Hat, next day he appeared in plain habit & the day following it was signified in Public orders that General Gadsden had resigned. What follies spring from a sensible Man.<sup>5</sup>

This minute Mr Heyward has brought in Letters from Charles Town of the 11th Septem. Capt Biddle of the Randolph within four or five days after sailing from our port John McQueen a Volunteer on board had taken & carried in 4 valuable prizes, two of them Armed Vessels, 1 of 20 6-pounders, Cargoes 700 Hdds Rum & much Sugar &c intended for the gentry now in Philadelphia, these added to other late Captures carried into Charles Town shew we have taken upward of 1200 Hdds Jamaica Rum intended for the Enemy's Army. I wish half the quantity was here for the use of our own.

I am called away. Adieu my Dear son. Henry Laurens

[P.S.] Did you obtain any quantity of Cloth, Blankets & Shoes from Philadelphia in Colo Hamilton's expedition?

Return my Letters from M L & H L. We must think also of Cloths for poor Benny.

RC (MHi: William Gilmore Simms Collection deposit, 1973).

<sup>1</sup> John Laurens (1754–82), who had recently returned to America after a six-year stay in Switzerland and England. He was at this time serving as a volunteer aide to General Washington. *DAB*.

<sup>2</sup> John Laurens' September 26 letter to his father is in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, p. 60. Laurens' "Letter . . . from Reading" has not been found.

<sup>3</sup> Martha Manning Laurens (d. 1781).

<sup>4</sup> Henry Laurens, Jr. (1763–1821), who remained in England to continue his education throughout the War for Independence. David D. Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), pp. 182, 190, 365, 369, 379.

<sup>5</sup> The feud between Gens. Christopher Gadsden and Robert Howe is discussed in Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775–1780* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1901), pp. 305–8. Congress accepted Gadsden's resignation on October 2. *JCC*, 8:757.

## Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke

Honored Sir,

York, State of Pensylvania, Sepr. 30th. 1777

Fryday Morning Congress left the City of Philadelphia, in Consequence of the British Armys gaining the Banks of Schuylkill at a fording Place about 17 miles from the City, They have since possessed themselves of the City. Genl. Washington from the Enemys movements expected they were determined to cross over at a considerable Distance further up, and indeed that they meant an Attack upon Redding where we had Considerable Stores. In short the number of fording Places it seems rendered it impracticable to hinder their passing. *How* entered the City last Thursday. Genl. Washington is approaching the City. His army are daily reinforcing. Genl. McDougall joind him with 1500 New Engd. Continentals & six hundred Jersey millitia. The Virginians are marching down thro' this Town daily with great Spirit. We have still the Possession of the River & have reinforced strongly Fort Island which defends the Cheveau de Frize. This with the Floating Batteries, Fire Ships and Gallies we are in Hopes will be a Defence against Hows Fleet should they attempt to come up. And Our army in the Rear must cutt off all Resources from the Enemys army, till it shall be thought expedient to make a general Attack. I think they are well disposed of, till they are *better* disposed of.

I congratulate you Sir upon Our Successes at the Northward, and the general Prospect we have of completing a glorious Campaign. This is my Hope and this by the Blessing of Heaven I think we have the most rational Expectations of. I am Honored Sir, Yr. most obedt., humble Servt.

Hy. Marchant

P.S. The enclosed Letter handed to me by one of the Delegates from So. Carolina, I beg yr. particular Care of.

RC (R-Ar).

## William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Hond Sir

York 30 Sepr 1777

Having in a joint Letter of this Date given you an Acco. of our present Situation & the Circumstances of public Affairs in these parts, have not much to add.<sup>1</sup> It is long since I have heard from you or my dear Friends in Lebanon & Connecticut, which gives me much Pain. I wod gladly have come home to see & find how They were &c instead of the tedious circum round about Journey of 160 or 70 miles to this Place, had I not been sensible the Tongue of slander wod have been busie; I intended when I came from home to have returned in Octo.



but the Events which have taken place, oblige me to postpone it a little longer, but hope to return soon, if it please God, the road may be safe, & have great hope the Affairs at the Northward will be happy which will also contribute greatly to alter their situation in this quarter for the better.

Majr. Troup, G Gates's Aid De Camp, came in this day with Letters from him &c which seem to exhillerate the Spirits of Congress, quite enow & indeed they were not too much depressed before, strongly hoping & expecting a reverse. I wish our Confidence was more placed & founded on the infinite Mercy & Goodness of God, & less on vain self Confidence & Sufficiency, but I hope God has great & merciful Designs for Us, notwithstanding our infinite unworthiness.

I intended at Philadelpa. to have wrote a Letter of Resignation to our Assembly, lest They shod reelect me for a Delegate (tho probably there wod have been no danger) but being driven to this Distance it may be impossible for me to get home in season especially if We shod be worsted at the Northwd & to be here without business wod be painful enow & believe I shall neglect it. They will do as they please but I have no Wish nor Design to attend again, sometime, if ever I shod be desired.<sup>2</sup>

The People of this State appear to be very many of them, weary of the Stagnation of Business, by the shutting up the Ports whereby They have so much lost their Gain, which seems to be all the God they know & are disaffected to the Cause for that & governmental & other Causes. They despise Continental Money, & take it only thro fear, & most extravagant quantitys for Trifles. It is worse at Lancaster than at Phila. & not better here, tho I think the People are of a better Disposition in some respects. The Town complain that they suffer in the midst of great Plenty, & there never was greater of the precious Fruits of the Earth; but the farmers refuse to bring in or to sell, unless for Salt & other necessities. They say they get a Load of wood here for one Silver Dollar, & must give four continental & so in proportion. Fine broad Cloths are £12 per yard &c here. I hope a heavy Tax will tend to reduce things to order which Congress will certainly recommend very soon. A Comte had been appointed to prepare, apportion &c at P. but we were obliged to decamp before it was brot in.<sup>3</sup> Tho nothing but Success against our Enemys will effectually extricate us from the Distresses respecting our Currency &c into which we are plunged. May God grant us Salvation for his own great Mercy & Name Sake & enable Us to Say not unto Us &c for I am sure we dont deserve it. I had but a faint Idea of the wickedness of the Country till I had traveled to this Country, seen & heard so much of & from the middle & southern parts. Well may we admire & adore the infinite Patience & long suffering of our God.<sup>4</sup>



<sup>1</sup> The Connecticut delegates' letter of this date has not been found.

<sup>2</sup> Williams and his colleague Richard Law were not reappointed delegates to Congress at the October session of the Connecticut General Assembly. Congress granted them leave to return home on December 3, 1777. See *JCC*, 9:994; and *A Historical Collection, From Official Records, Files, &c., of the Part Sustained by Connecticut, during the War of the Revolution*, comp. Royal R. Hinman (Hartford: E. Gleason, 1842), p. 291.

<sup>3</sup> On September 10 the committee appointed to consider the proceedings of the New England conference had been instructed to prepare a recommendation to the states "to proceed to taxation" as well as "an estimate of the quotas to be raised in each State by such taxation." *JCC*, 8:731. For the work of this committee, see Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke, August 18, 1777, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Williams to Trumbull, October 2, 1777.

## Board of War to George Washington

Sir

York Town Octr. 1. 1777

I had the Honour of your Excellency's Letter of the 28th Ultimo which I recd. but this Day.<sup>1</sup> I have attended to the Business you were pleased to recommend as far as Circumstances will admitt & shall use every Exertion in my Power convinced as I am of the Necessity of adding every possible Strength to the Army at this important Juncture. I have given Directions for the Route of the Troops agreeable to your Request & have supperadded what I thought would conduce to accelerate their March. I have desired the Officers commanding Detachments to send their heavy Baggage to the Ford & take every possible Means to lighten the Troops & force their March as far as is consistent with the Health & Spirits of the Men. They are desired to impress Waggons to carry on the lame & fatigued as they go along. I wish I could give you better Accounts of the Virginia Militia than that great Numbers of them are but illy provided with Arms & Necessaries. The Men seem to be good & I make no Doubt will use such Materials as they have to their own Honour & the Advantage of the Cause. I could wish indeed they had the Arms which are in the Hands of other Militia who have not behaved with that Spirit & Firmness which the Salvation of their *own Country* demanded. I would mention to your Excellency that I think it best to station an Officer at the Ford above the Mouth of French Creek to direct the further progress of the Troops. If such an one can be had at Lancaster he will be sent but lest a Proper Person cannot be found there would it not be better for your Excellency to send one? The Militia gone thro' this Town & which are by Detachment on their Way are those of Fairfax, Prince William, Loudon, Berkely, Culpepper & Faquier

amtg to about	1200
(Continental) Part of Gibson Regt, about	400 well provided
	1600

Those of Frederick & Dunmore Counties are coming on & it is said in

larger Proportions than the Rest. We are also informed that recruiting goes on well in Virginia & that a considerable Number of continental Troops (Recruits) are on their Way. One hundred & ten arrived this Day, but naked & unarmed & how they & the Rest are to be armed & equipped is yet a Mystery. Could not the Arms be taken from the sick & given to those who are well. Chester County would afford a great supply of Blanketts if they were taken from the disaffected; & it is to be wished Mr Mease would appoint some Place for delivering out Cloathing. Shoes are engrossed all over the Country & can be obtained upon no Terms but such as are extravagant except they are siezed & paid for at a reasonable Price. I enclose a Letter from Major Nicholas who was sent for the Arms at Springfield & Brookfield & altho it appeared from the Returns now in the Office that there were at least 6,000, your Excellency will see how difficult it has been to obtain the Number mentioned in the Letter.<sup>2</sup> How this can happen is difficult to determine. The Board request you will be pleased to send off Orders to Major Nicholas what he shall do with the Arms & any Stores he may bring. It is rather Malapropos to bring Stores into this State at this Time. General Heath should be ordered to send all the Arms he keeps for the Regts *to be raised* & let them be delivered to those which *are* raised. The Arms kept in Connecticut *In Case of an Invasion* should be ordered where there *is actually* an Invasion as I concieve. But no Doubt some Order will be taken in this Matter. Will your Excellency be pleased to direct what shall be done with the Recruits who cannot from all Appearances be armed & clothed here? As the Board meet but irregularly owing to Matters not being in a proper Train here yet, I have suggested much of this Letter to Your Excellency & if there be too much Haste & *Egotism* you will be pleased to excuse it & believe me to be with the greatest Respect Your Excellency's very obed. & most hble Servt,

Richard Peters

P.S. By a Letter from Major Nicholas since writing the above it seems that Col. Cheevers is on his Way with 2,000 Stands of Arms beside those intended to be brought by the Major. As I have no Assistant my Deputy not being here it will prevent my Attention to the forwarding the Troops in the Manner I could wish as I am & shall be much engaged in the Arrangement of the Office for a few Days when I shall be ready to execute with the greatest Industry & readiness any Commands your Excellency may be pleased to honour me with. I shall forward the Troops as they arrive here to Lancaster & if I hear of any Difficulties there shall go thither to surmount them as far as I can.<sup>3</sup>

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's September 28 letter requesting the board to expedite the progress of the southern militia detachments coming to reinforce the army is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:277.

<sup>2</sup> In his September 24 letter from Lebanon, Conn., Samuel Nicholas reported that he had been able to collect only 2,600 stand of arms because General Heath was keeping 600 for regiments that "are raising" and the Connecticut governor and council were retaining most of the arms lent them "in case of invasion." Washington Papers, DLC.

In reaction to an earlier report from Nicholas, Richard Peters had written the following note to Washington's military secretary Tench Tilghman on September 29: "I cannot help informing you that I have just had the Mortification to receive by Express from Springfield an Account that there are but about fifteen hundred Arms at that Place instead of Six thousand which by the Returns in the Office signed by the Commissary of Stores at that Place & at Boston appeared to be at Springfield & Brookfield. Major Nicholas who was dispatched about the Business has sent off to Boston to know what has become of the Arms. Has any been ordered by the General? or can any Account be given why Returns should be made which are not founded in Truth unless Orders have been given since the Returns. I heard Genl Knox had ordered 2,000 but know not how this Matter is. Unless the whole Conduct of the Arms & Stores are in one Body or Person we shall have a confused & flemish Account of our military Stores." Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> The next day Peters sent Washington the following report on this subject. "One hundred & eighteen Recruits belonging to the 2d & 4th Virginia & 2d Maryland Regiments were sent off to Day. The Returns I have the Honour to enclose you. Shoes have been furnished them but they want everything else. As I did not know where the Clothier or Commissary General's Stores were deposited they are ordered to Reading on a Presumption that the Articles they want have been sent thither. They were so very destitute that it was thought best not to send them to the Army immediately lest they should be more an Incumbrance than otherwise. They are under the Command of a Capt Calmis of Col. Spotswood's Regt who is ordered to send to your Excellency to know where they can be equipped. When the Clothier or Commisary Genl become Stationary it would be well for them to inform the Board, & perhaps your Excellency will be pleased to appoint some Place for all Recruits passing thro' York or Lancaster to be sent." Ibid.

## John Hancock to Dorothy Hancock

York Town in Pennsylvania

My Dear, Dear Dolly, 90 miles from Philada. 1st Octor. 1777

You would not wonder at my not having wrote you oftner since your Departure from Philada. if you knew my Scituation since that time. I have been in a constant hurry, & very soon after you left me our Alarms began & continued Day & night untill the mornng. of the 19th Sepr. when about one oClock (& I was not in bed, nor had my Cloaths off for three Nights before) I Rec'd an Express from the General's aid De Camp recommending the immediate Removal of Congress, as the Enemy had it in their power to throw a party that Night into the City. I instantly gave the alarm, Rous'd the Members, collected my Waggons, Horses, Carriage &c and after having fix'd my Packages, Papers &c in the Waggons and Sent them off, about 3 oClock in the morning I Set off myself for Bristol, from thence by a round about course of several Days I reach'd this place, where Congress is



now sitting. I could not come the direct Road, being prevented by the Enemy. I am very well Accommodated in point of lodging, & the place is pleasant enough, & if I had you with me I should be happy. After what I have mention'd of the Scenes I have pass'd thro' since your Departure, I know you will hold me excus'd that I have not oftner wrote. I confess I have wrote you but once, & that by the Post under cover to Mr. Bant, which hope you Rec'd, tho' a short one.<sup>1</sup> I Rec'd a Letter from Mr Burr, & was glad to find you had got safe thus far. I have Rec'd two Letters from Capt Newell, the last from New Haven where you was well which gave me much pleasure. The Day before yesterday Dodd Return'd here, and brought me your Letter from Worcester, which Rejoic'd me exceedingly, & I could wish to have been with you. I have wrote to Mr Bant<sup>2</sup> to Tell Mr Sprigs to have the light Chariott well look'd to & made strong, I would not have it painted, I want it well repair'd, that it may be ready if I should want it to meet me on the Road on my Return, or if I should hereafter find myself obliged to Spend the winter here, the Carriage will be ready to bring you to me, for most assuredly in that case I shall Send for you; tho' I hope the Campaign will soon be over, & give me an Oppory of Returning home, at least for a time, but of this more hereafter.

I am exceedingly well Scituated with respect to a House & Lodgings, the Lady with whom I am is a most agreeable, pleasant woman. Mr. Chace lodges in the same house & no others. I find my Carpets very convenient. I got all my things safe here. I have had since your Departure a Touch of the Cholick, which worried me much, I Rode in the Rain & was much wet, which beleive brought it on; and I have been sadly Afflicted with my old disorder, it has not yet left me, I am still unwell, but hope soon to be better.

General Howe is beyond a Doubt in possession of Philada. tho' I have Rec'd no particulars. If you Ask me how he came to pass our Army without a Battle, & get into the City, my Answer must be suspended till I receive a full Accott. of the Transactions, & then you shall know. It is impossible for me fully to determine as to my Stay here, but hope in my next to be able to be more certain. I wish you may have thought by the return waggon George to Send me a little Keg of pickled peppers. I want some much, but if not sent, it is no matter.

I wish you to go to Bridgwater & pay a Visit to my Mother, & pray Remember me to her in the most affectionate terms, & to the whole Family.

I will write you again in a few days, I must beg that you will improve every oppory. of writing to me, I am sure if you knew the pleasure & Satisfaction it gives me to hear from you, you would Seek oppors. of Gratifying me by frequent Letters. I intreat you to write, & desire Mr Bant to write me. Pray let the things at Mr Woodburn's





The Old Court House of York County, Pennsylvania



Interior of the Old Court House, York County

be Taken care of, let the Case of plate be in your lodging Chamber. I will order down the Trunk of things at Stratford, & then you can take the Stuff you want, some Waggon's are going down.

Remember me to all Friends as if nam'd, I have not time to be particular. I am surrounded with persons applying about Business, some French as usual, that I must close, and Defer untill the next Letter what I have further to Say.

I long to See you, & hope for that pleasure soon. Adieu, My Dear Dolly. May a kind providence ever Guard you, & with my best wishes for every Good, Am, Yours most affectionately,

John Hancock

[P.S.] Pray Take good Care of Vilet, & let her spend a few days in Boston among her friends. Remember me to Mrs Homes, & to Mr Woodburn's Family.

To morrow I Expect Mr. & Mrs. Hillegas & the whole Family here, they are to Reside here, I Sup'd with them at Reading on my way here, and Lodg'd at Mrs. Graydon's, they all beg'd to be Remembred to you most affectionately. If you See Docr Cooper pray Remember me to him & Lady, & to Mr W. Cooper & Lady, & to all Friends, let them know how my time is engross'd by the publick, which must be my Apology for not writing them. Do Send me all the Newspapers, & everything stirring.

RC (RPB-JH). Addressed: "To Mrs. Hancock, To the Care of Mr. William Bant, who is requested to forward it by a special Messenger to whatever place Mrs. Hancock may be."

<sup>1</sup> Probably Hancock's September 17 letter to Dorothy.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Sir, York Town Octr. 1 1777

General Gates's Letters with enclosures to Congress Per express this day are refered to the Committee of Intelligence for publication and will be sent this Afternoon to Lancaster for that purpose,<sup>1</sup> therefore transcripts are less necessary, but I would furnish them for the satisfaction of Council if I was not very unwell, as thereby they might be furnished with the news a few hours sooner.

The Express give a verbal account that two Spys were decoied by some Continental Troops round our Genl. Clinton's Quarters habited like unto the Brittish Soldiers for the very purpose. The Spy's asked when they landed, they were told the day before—where Gen. Clinton was, for they had some thing to communicate, they were told they should be counducted to him—when they came into his presence,

with much surprise, they said he was not the Genl. Clinton they enquired for, he replied he could do their Business and accordingly ordered them to be hanged in an hour, but upon discovering some important intelligence they were respited. In consequence of their Information &c Genl. Clinton, Govr. Clinton and Genl. Putnam were suddenly in motion, the Number of Troops under their command or the number of the Enemy or their movements are all unknown. A singular anecdote I must not omit. One of the Spys when discovered swallowed a small silver Ball which he was made to disgorge by the immediate application of an Emetic, it contained intelligence from the Brittish Officer, Clinton, who commanded at the highlands to Genl. Burgoyne. These anecdotes will not be published nor are they to be depended on, nevertheless as I beleive them they are offered for your amusement, I am with the most respectful Salutation to the Council, Sir, Yr. very obt. huml. Serv. Daniel Roberdeau

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> Although these letters were referred to the Board of War on October 2, there is no indication in the journals that they were referred to the Committee of Intelligence.

## Nathaniel Folsom to Meshech Weare

Sir,

York. State of Pensylvania Oct. 2d. 1777

I arrived at this Place the 28th of September, about Ninety miles west from Philadelphia, and Congress is now setling here. Genl. How took Possession of Phila. last Fryday. We having large Stores at Reading, Lancaster &c which were greater Objects to Us than the City of Philadelphia and the Enemy making frequent Attempts to get to the Westward of Genl. Washington in order to destroy those Stores, and there being many fording Places on the Schuylkill Genl. Washington was obliged to string his Army for twenty Miles on said River, which weakened him to such a Degree, together with the frequent Marches and counter Marches of the Enemy, that when they crossed over Genl. Washington was fifteen Miles above them, without a possibility of overtaking them.

However He is now reinforced with 1000 Men from Peekskill commanded by Genl. McDougall, One Battallion of the State Troops of Virginia, and 1000 of Their Millitia. 1000 more are on their March and will join the Army in a few Days. Also 1000 from Maryland, and some Jersey Millitia have also joined the Army. By a Letter from Genl. Washington he informed Us that in a few Days he intended to attack the Enemy,<sup>1</sup> that his Troops were in good Spirits, and altho' the Enemy had got into Phila. yet he did not doubt he should be able to give a good account of Them. And as we are in Possession of the



River Delaware with Fire Ships, Fire Rafts, Gallie Floating Batteries &c we doubt not but Mr. How's Situation will be made very disagreeable to Him.

I most sincerely congratulate you Sir, upon the Success of Our Army in the Northern Department, and the hopefull Prospect we have of Success there, and that a Divine Blessing may attend Our Arms, and in the End preserve our invaluable Liberties is the Sincere Prayer of, Your most obedient, humble Servant,

Nathl. Folsom

RC (Nh-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> Apparently Washington's September 29 letter to President Hancock, which was read in Congress on October 1. See *JCC*, 8:756; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:284-85.

## Elbridge Gerry to Joseph Trumbull

Dear sir

York in Pennsylvania, Octr 2d 1777

I recd yours of the 16th Sepr. & not having attended the Treasury of late from the Want of Health, was unacquainted with the order of the Board before the rect of your Letter.<sup>1</sup> I think that your request is reasonable, & as Philadelphia is now in the Hands of the Enemy, that You cannot be accomodated in any other Place where Congress shall meet, were there no other *objections* to the removal of the Commissioners; but of *those* there are undoubtedly many, & such as cannot be easily answered. When the Board meets, I shall propose a Reversal of the Order.<sup>2</sup>

The Loss of Philadelphia was unexpected, & had it been in any other State than Pennsylvania, Delaware or Maryland, I question whether it would have happened, but as General Washington's Army will be reinforced in a Day or two with 3000 of the Virginia Militia, 1500 Continental Troops from Peek's Kill & 1000 of the Jersey militia, I hope it will be soon recovered.

The new Commissaries do not appear to be well acquainted with their Business, the army having been one whole Day without provisions. I fear the Consequences of these alterations; which You well know were contrary to my repeated Remonstrances.

I congratulate You on the agreeable prospects in the northern Department & am with much Esteem yours, Sincerely,

E Gerry

RC (Ct).

<sup>1</sup> Joseph Trumbull's September 16 letter to Gerry has not been found.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on the order requiring the commissioners settling Trumbull's accounts to conduct their business in Pennsylvania, see Eliphalet Dyer to Joseph Trumbull, October 8, 1777.



## William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

2d Oct [1777] Thursday

Since the above Mr Brown is arrived by whom I have the Pleasure & Honor of your kind Favour, & rejoyce to hear of Your, & the Welfare of my dear Friends.

Have had nothing directly from Genl Washington these 2 or 3 Days, but hear he has approached nearer to Howe probably a most important Action will soon insue. Also that the Enemy have taken the Delaware Frigate in the River, not by their Ships which had not been able to get up but that the Master who commanded her (dont know his Name) came up to the Wharf, & tis supposed gave or sold her. With her help I expect they will demolish the other Ships & Fire Craft &c &c which were confident of defending the river, near the Cheaux de Frize & soon have their Fleet in possession of it. If true, language cant express my Feelings towd the accursed Villain.<sup>1</sup>

Capt Biddle of the Randolph, has just carrd in to Charlestown S. Cara 4 important Prizes, one of 20 Gun, with 700 puncheons of rum, & 300 Hds Sugar &c, the rest very valuable. Please to acknowledge for me, to Genl Huntington, Mr Sherman & Mr Hosmer the receipt of their very agreeable Favors. I regret that I cod not answer Them, but my Colleagues obliged me to write so much &c it was impossible, in the Intervals of Congress, meeting now twice a day.<sup>2</sup> Mr Law writes Mr. Hosmer, my respectful Compliments attend them, & the other Gentlemen & very kindly accept Mr Wales's Compliments, in Col Dyers Letter.

May the God of all Mercy appear for our help & Salvation, & the Glory be his only & forever. I have not room to add, but that I am now & ever, with the greatest Respect & affection, your dutiful & most Obedt,

W Williams

[P.S.] My most Friendly & sincere Compliments to Col. Jos. T., Bror Davd. & Jona. if at home. Tho I dont often mention, tis not because I ever forget my hond & dear Mother Trumbull.

RC (NN). A continuation of Williams to Trumbull, September 30, 1777.

<sup>1</sup> The *Delaware* had been captured after running aground. See Marine Committee to Charles Alexander, September 26, 1777, note.

<sup>2</sup> It was resolved on October 1 "That, until further order, Congress shall meet precisely at ten o'Clock A.M. sit to one, then adjourn to four, P.M.: then to meet and proceed on business." *JCC*, 8:756.

## Samuel Chase to Thomas Johnson

Dear Sir,

York Town. October 3d. 1777

In my last, a few Days ago, by Express, I transmitted to you the Intelligence from the North, since which We have heard Nothing from that Quarter. I flatter Myself the Campaign there will close with Honor and Success; indeed I am so sanguine as to expect to hear of the total Defeat of Burgoyne. I beleive I enclosed You the amount of our Army under Genl Gates, on the 15 of Sept. Total 6,618 Rank & files, 664 Commd. officers, 718 Serjeants, 308 Drums & fifes, Artillery 158, fit for Duty, Sick present 317, Sick absent 1384. These are Regulars. Under Genl. Lincoln is about 5000 Militia.

We have not heard from Genl. Washington since the 29 Sept. Our army is marching towards the City.

If our assembly should meet, I submit to you the propriety of Recommending a Draft from the Militia to recruit our Quota, I suppose the Trial must be made of a small part, e.g., a fifteenth, which will produce 2000. The time of service must not be for less than a Year, and I suppose Substitutes will be accepted. Can any Mode, but a Draft, be adopted?

It will be absolutely necessary to fall on some Measures to furnish our Militia & Quota with Arms, and the latter with Cloaths & Tents &c &c. I know but of two ways to effect it, by Importation, & by Manufacturing, the former by Trade will not probably answer. I would propose to send or employ an agent at the Courts of Versailles & Madrid to apply to each of those Courts to supply our State with 10,000 Stand of good Arms, 20 brass field Pieces from 4 to 12 pounders, 10 Howits from 6 to 9 Inches, Cloathing compleat for 5000 Men, and Ravens Duck for Tents for that Number of Soldiers, 10,000 pair of Stockings & 10,000 pair of Shoes to be sent in a frigate of force, at the Risque & to be paid for by the State in produce within three Years after the End of the present War with Great Britain.

I would have the Govr. & Council authorised to give not exceeding 20 Dollars for each Stand of arms in our State, & would exempt all persons actually employed in particular Manufactories from all military Duty.

Our Confederacy is to be resumed this Day.

I know You will receive this Letter in the same friendly Manner it is wrote & therefore offer no apology for it. Farewell. Your affectionate and Obedt. Servant,

S Chase

RC (PHi).

## James Duane to George Clinton

Sir

York Town Pennsylvania, 3d October 1777

I wrote to your Excellency from Lancaster covering a Copy of General Washington's Letter to Congress which explains the Causes of the Loss of Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup> I wish these dispatches may have got safe to hand. Congress at their first meeting at Lancaster adjourn'd to York Town 22 miles further Southward, and ten from the Susquehanna. Lancaster they found crowded and in other Respects exceptionable; Here we are at least sufficiently *retird*, & can deliberate without Interruption. It was much against my Inclinations that at so advanced a season, and destitute of winter Cloaths and after a long absence from my Family, I found it necessary to come forward, least our State should be unrepresented and my Constituents offended. I depend on your Excellency's Attention to get me reliev'd. Since the first sitting of the second Congress, which is now upwards of two years & five months, I have not on the whole spent four months with my Family. My feelings as a husband and a Parent are hurt upon the Reflection and I hope I may without Presumption say that my past Services entitle me to some Indulgence: and that it is not unreasonable to ask a little time to repair the waste which, from my total neglect of every thing which related to myself, has been made in my private Affairs.

Yesterday I had the Honour of receiving your Excellency's dispatches of the 18th & 22d Instant. We cannot be sufficiently thankful to the Supreme Being for rescuing our bleeding Country from the Calamities of an Indian war which threatned our western frontier with ruin and desolation. That under Heaven it was saved by the valor and good Conduct of our own Countrymen is an additional Satisfaction. Every mouth is full of the Praises of Herkemer, Gansevoort, & Willet. The Victory acquir'd by General Starke was as *seasonable*, as *glorious*, and is the more eminently distinguished as it was gain'd by Militia over veteran and experienced Troops; and tho' nothing decisive has taken place between the grand armies under General Gates and General Burgoine, the late gallant Behaviour of the left wing of our Army, with the Embarrassments which surround the British Troops & the Superiority of our Forces, give us the highest reason to look up to divine Providence for a Happy issue of the Campaign in that Quarter. God graciously grant the full scope of your wishes, "*that it may conduce to render the present Campaign decisive.*"

The Army under General Washington receives accessions of Strength daily; a Continental Battalion and considerable Bodies of militia have passed thro' this place from Virginia. More are expected from Maryland and from New Jersey. This state alone is sunk into supineness and inaction from which even the loss of their Capitol has

not been able to rouse them! It's new Constitution and laws are unfit for this tempestuous Season: It's Governor inexperienced, and as appears to me, unsupported. Many of the leading Whiggs are disgusted and view the storm at a distance with Sullen Concern; and no proper means are exerted as far as I can see, to reanimate the sluggish spirits of the people, oppose the successful Efforts of the disaffected, or to draw forth the vast Strength of this State, which of itself is able to crush General Howe's slender army, humanly speaking, into the Dust. This I fear sir, is but too just a picture of this once formidable government.

RC (N). In Duane's hand, though not signed. Tr (DLC). RC damaged; missing words supplied from Tr.

<sup>1</sup> Duane's letter "from Lancaster" has not been found. Washington's September 23 letter to President Hancock, explaining why the British were about to capture Philadelphia, is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:257-60.

## John Hancock to George Duffield and William White

Sir,<sup>1</sup> York Town. Pennsylvania Octr. 3d. 1777.

I have the Pleasure to inform you that the Congress in Consideration of your Patriotism, Piety & zealous Attachment to the Liberty & Happiness of the United States of America, have appointed you one of their Chaplains, and that they request your Attendance as soon as you conveniently can.<sup>2</sup>

I have the Honour to be, Sir, your most obed. & very hble Serv.

J. H. Presid.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A).

<sup>1</sup> George Duffield (1732-90), a Presbyterian minister and graduate of the College of New Jersey, was pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. *DAB*. William White (1748-1836), an Anglican minister and rector of Christ Church in Philadelphia, became the first Episcopal bishop of Pennsylvania after the War for Independence. *DAB*.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 8:756.

## John Hancock to the Massachusetts Council

Gentlemen, York Town: Pennsylvania, Octr. 3d. 1777.

Your Favour of the 17th ulto. enclosing a Copy of a Letter from Mr. Loring Commissary of Prisoners, relative to the Exchange of



Doctor Church for Doctr. McHenry, was duely received and laid before Congress: In Consequence of which I am to inform you, they immediately, and in the strongest Terms, expressed their Disapprobation of the Proposal, and put their Negative upon it.<sup>1</sup>

I have the Honour to be, with the greatest Respect, Gentlemen,  
your most obed & very hble Servt. John Hancock Presidt

RC (M-Ar). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 8:758. The Massachusetts Council's September 17 letter to President Hancock and the enclosed letter from Joshua Loring are in *PCC*, item 65, 1:261-64. There is further information about the treason of Dr. Benjamin Church in volume two of these *Letters*.

## John Hancock to Joseph Trumbull

Sir York Town in Pennsylvania, Octobr. 3d. 1777

Your Letter of 16th ulto. I duly Rec'd, and laid before Congress, in consequence of which I have it in Charge to Transmit to you, and Inclos'd you will find Two Warrants, Vizt.

One on John Lawrence Esqr. Com- missioner of the Loan Office for the State of Connectt. dated Octobr. 1st. 1777	}	Dolls. 50,000
One on Joseph Clarke Esqr. Com- missioner of the Loan Office for the State of Rhode Island, Do. Date		50,000
		<hr/> Dollars 100,000

and for which you are Accountable.<sup>1</sup>

I Take the freedom to Inclose you a Letter for Mr. Bant<sup>2</sup> of Boston, which I Request the favour of you to forward by the first safe hand, and wish you would urge the Delivery of it as soon as the person arrives in Boston.

I wish you every Good, and am with Sentiments of Esteem, Sir,  
Your very Humble Servt. John Hancock Presidt

[P.S.] I shall be Glad to hear, when you write this way, that the Letter for Mr Bant reach'd you.

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 8:756. Former Commissary General Joseph Trumbull's September 16 letter to President Hancock, requesting the appropriation of \$100,000 to pay for expenses incurred by the commissariat in Connecticut and Rhode Island, is in *PCC*, item 66, 1:341.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

## James Lovell to Robert Treat Paine

Dear Sir,

York Octr. 3d 1777

Removed thus far more distant from you than the Head Quarters of our Army, you cannot expect so early Intelligence of military movements from me as from Persons near the General. Indeed I can acquaint you with nothing at this Time only that Congress is thrown within the Department of the Commissary of the Army for Support of itself, its Officers in various Boards, its Servants & Horses.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Howe will want Burgoyne's Assistance this Winter as a Writer of Comedies in Philadelphia, for, in Philadelphia I fear he will remain from the best Judgements I could form of Things as I passed into the Neighbourhood of our Army in my Rout from Philadelphia hither. If you have more pleasing Expectations excited by Letters from Head Quarters I wish not to deprive you of the Satisfaction of them by my Forebodings.

I hope yr. Privateers will pick up some Transport with Shoes & other Necessaries for the Army which by the late Marches & Countermarches thro Brook, Creeks, Rivers, Bushes, Swamps and the whole Variety of rocky Ground is much tattered I assure you. I think more so than they would have been in 3 or 4 pitched Battles. Our main Hope is the northern Army. By their Valour New England may enjoy a comfortable Winter. I wish it most sincerely, and am, Dear Sir, yr. Friend & humb Servt.

James Lovell

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> The delegates' inability to obtain adequate personal supplies in York led them on October 2 to resolve that commissary and quartermaster officials should provide "such articles . . . as may be required by the several members [of Congress], for the use of themselves, their servants and horses, the said members paying the cost of the said articles; and that this resolution extend to the secretaries, treasurer and the officers of the several boards and committees of Congress." *JCC*, 8:760.

Charles Carroll of Carrollton  
to Charles Carroll, Sr.

Dr. Papa,

York 5th Oct. 1777.

My last gave you an account of the fight between Gates & Burgoyne; we have not recd. since any news from that quarter from whence I presume Burgoyne did not renew his attack between the 19th & 20th for had another battle been fought in that interval the news would have reached Congress before this time; and I also conclude from this inaction of Burgoyne that his army must have suffered considerably in the conflict of the 19th, & perhaps he himself may

have been wounded. To judge from appearances, the spirits of our army in that quarter, & of the eastern & New York militia, our affairs in that department are likely to end happily; I wish I could say as much for the middle department. Docr. Howard, who left this yesterday, & the army but two days ago will give an account of it. I am Sorry to say that the discipline of it, while I remained with it, appeared extreamly defective. In a word till this army undergoes a thorough reformation by cashiering Several officers & some in high command, by casting several regiments into one, by reforming Several abuses & the introduction of some new & wholesome regulations, we must not look for its doing any thing considerable. While I was with the army two opportunities were offered to Howe of cutting it to pieces; his not embracing those opportunities convinces me that he either wants intelligence, which however I believe is not the case, or that he is very weak, or a bad general. I am inclined most to believe that his army is weak; yet if it be true that we hear, that he has made such considerable detachments from it, he must have a sovereign contempt for ours. We have no later intelligence from Gen. Washington than what is contained in his letter of the 29th last informing Congress of his resolution of moving towards Pha.

The Congress still continues the same noisy, empty & talkative assembly it always was since I have known it. No progress has been made in the Confederation tho' all seem desirous of forming one. A good confederation I am convinced would give us great strength & new vigor. This State is in a great degree disaffected, & the well affected are inactive & supine. This supineness & inactivity I attribute to the government & to the men who govern; they want wisdom, influence, & the confidence of a very great portion of the People, particularly of those whose abilities & activity might in short time set things to rights. The Assembly was to sit at Lancaster, but they had not the day before yesterday made a house, my hope is they will not, & that a Convention will take place. The Quakers, Dunkers, & Menonists are almost to a man against us, and I believe they make near a 1/4 part of the whole People.

This letter I shall deliver to Col. Lloyd, who came here yesterday & he shall set off tomorrow for Annapolis.

I have only recd. two letters from you Since I left Doohoragen, the last was dated the 17th past. Col Lloyd informs me that the Enemy landed on Poplar Island & took away some of our People & stock, but his account seems to be very imperfect & therefore I hope not true. Pray let me know in your next whether they have done any damage on the Island, & whether Sears continues to make salt there. How do the carpenters go on in Annapolis? I hope the pavillions are covered in, & the window frames put up, or planks to prevent the rain from driving in. Has Dorsey as yet assessed Doohoragen Manor? Let me know what he has assessed it at.



A post is now established between this place & Baltimore but the days of his arrival & departure are not yet fixed with that precision one could wish; however your letters lodged with Miss Goddard will come safe to me. I wish you a long continuance of your health and remain, Yr. most affectionate Son,

Ch. Carroll of Carrollton

RC (MdHi).

## James Duane to Philip Schuyler

Dear General

York Town 5t Octr. 1777

I did not receive your favour of the 16th Instant 'till this day. In the Interim Major Troup arrived with an Account of the Battle between the American & British Armies near Saraghtoga on the 19th and of some advantages gained by Col. Brown near the Lakes. It amounts at least to a Check of General Burgoine in his Career towards Albany. I am however sensible that the Fate of the British Army can not be decided but at the Hazard of another Battle: the Event of which I wait with an anxious Heart; hoping however that with the Blessing of Providence the superiority which we have in numbers may be improved to the salvation of my dear Country.

General Howe has had the good Fortune to make himself master of Philada. without our Army's being able to give him a second battle or oppose His progress. A Deluge of Rain which fell the Instant the two armies were ready to engage a second time, and which besides completely destroying General Washington's ammunition, reduced him to a necessity of retiring to some distance from the Enemy; gave General Howe the wished for Opportunity of marching towards Philad. uninterrupted; and the dispersion of General Waine's division (which had been left to harrass the Enemy in the Rear while our main body was endeavoring by forced marches to present themselves in the front, to dispute the passage of the Schuylkill) suddenly effected by a Successful Attack of a superior party of the Enemy in the night, in which he was in fact routed tho' without any considerable Loss; left it in Gl. Howe's power to improve to the utmost Advantage the good Fortune he had Just before derived from the Deluge. General Washington is reinforcing his Army by an Accession of Troops from the Southward and New Jersey, in addition to General McDougald's Brigade. His Troops have not been much diminished by Battle, but have suffered extremely from the fatigue of Severe marching. Indeed I am of Opinion he must in the Course of a week have more men than he commanded when he went out to meet G Howe; While all Accounts agree that in the bloody battle of the Brandywine the



Enemy lost in killed and wounded 1970; besides Desertions & those who fell in skirmishes before & since.

General Washington's Army is movd down near German Town. When his Reinforcements are arrived he will endeavour to repair his past misfortunes & I sincerely hope I maybe able to send you some more agreable Intelligence than At present in my power.

General St Clair is neither tried nor Arraigned. How can it be expected in the critical situation of our Affairs: & when his Hearing is to be preceeded by the Report of a Committee who are to collect materials from A Variety of distant Sources for the purpose? With respect to yourself I think you have determined wisely: I advise you however to write a civil Letter to Congress requesting them to give you a Copy of your Charge and assign a day for the Hearing, hinting that a delay in your painful Situation is a Severity which you neither merit from your Country, nor have any Reason to expect from Congress.<sup>1</sup>

Give my Compl's to Maj. H.B. Livingston & tell him he is promoted to the Rank of Lieut Colonel as is Col. Troup for the news from the northern Army.<sup>2</sup> I shoud first have said that a Monument is ordered to be erected in Honour of the Memory of Genl Herkimer—Genl Stark advanced to the Rank of Brig. Genl. in the Continental service. Gansevoort has the Thanks of Congress; & is appointed Col. Commodant of Fort Schuyler—Willet the Thanks of Congress & a Sword.

Present my Compl's to Mrs. Schuyler, the young Ladies & all our Friends, and believe me to be, Dear Sir, with great Regard, Your most Obed & very huml Servant,

Jas Duane

P.S. What became of my Crop? Were the Barrack's or Barn finished? Where is J Ellice? I have not a word about my Farm; & am banished (contrary to the promises of them who prevaild on me to come to this State) already six tedious months. Am I never to be reliev'd?

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the congressional investigation of Generals St. Clair and Schuyler, see John Hancock to Arthur St. Clair and Philip Schuyler, August 5, 1777, note.

<sup>2</sup> See JCC, 9:769–70. President Hancock informed Henry Brockholst Livingston and Robert Troup of their promotions in brief letters that he wrote to them on October 5 and 6 respectively. PCC, item 12A, fols. 285, 294.

## James Duane to Jonathan Trumbull, Jr.

Dear Sir

York Town 5h Octobr. 1777

Your Letter to Congress has been read & refered to the Board of Treasury.<sup>1</sup> I could not however lose a moment in assuring you that you have reced a very wrong Impression from the Report to which you refer: There is no Officer in the Continental Service who stands

higher than yourself in the Esteem of the Board of Treasury & of Congress in general: & the Board will at all times be pleasd to give you every honourable testimonial in Justification of your Conduct. To me be assur'd it will be a singular pleasure. You will have something more formal on this Subject soon. In the mean believe that I am, with very great Respect, Dear Sir, Your most Obedt, huml Sert,

Jas. Duane

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> On October 2 Congress read a September 20 letter from Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., deputy paymaster general in the northern department, complaining about a September 6 resolve which expressed disapproval of "the stoppages made by [Trumbull], out of the pay of the troops in that department on account of clothing." Congress referred this letter to the Board of Treasury, of which Duane was chairman, but otherwise took no action on it. See *JCC*, 8:716, 758; and *PCC*, item 78, 22:529-30.

## John Hancock to Peter Gansevoort

Sir, York Town: Pennsylvania. Octr. 5th. 1777.

It is with Pleasure I comply with the Order of Congress in transmitting the enclosed Resolve, in which you will percieve they have voted Thanks to you, and to the officers & Troops under your Command for the Bravery & Perseverance which were displayed in the Defence of Fort Schuyler.

In Consideration of your gallant Behaviour the Congress have been pleased to appoint you Colonel Commandant of the Fort.<sup>1</sup>

I must beg you will please to communicate to the Officers & Troops under your Command this distinguished Mark of the Approbation of their Country.

I have the Honour to be, with great Respect, Sir, your most obed. & very hble Servt.

J.H. Presidt

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A). Addressed: "Colonel Gansevoort, Colo. Commandt. of Fort Schuyler."

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:771. This day Hancock also wrote a letter to Col. Marinus Willet of New York, informing him that Congress had decided to present him with "an elegant Sword" in recognition of "the Successful Sally you made on the Enemy while they invested Fort Schuyler." Berg Collection, NN; *PCC*, item 12A, fol. 287; and *JCC*, 9:771-72.

## John Hancock to Horatio Gates

Sir, York Town: Pennsylvania, Octr. 5th. 1777.

I have been duely honored with your Favours of the 22d ulto. by Major Troup (accompanied with sundry Inclosures) and immediately

communicated to Congress the very agreeable Intelligence it contained.

The Success of our Arms in the late Repulse of Genl. Burgoyne, and the favourable aspect of Affairs in your Quarter, gave the highest Pleasure to Congress. They have particularly, as you will find by the enclosed Resolves, expressed their warmest approbation of the Bravery and Conduct of the Troops under your Command in the late Engagement with the British Army under Genl. Burgoyne, and I must beg you will communicate to them the Sense of their Country with Regard to their Behaviour on that Occasion.<sup>1</sup>

I entertain the most pleasing Expectation that from your Vigilance, Spirit, & Activity, the Army of the United States, will be ere long crowned with full & complete Victory over the Enemies of America, & the Rights of Mankind, in the Department committed to your Care. I beg Leave to refer your Attention to the enclosed Resolves, and, wishing you every private and public Prosperity, I have the Honour to be, with the greatest Respect, Sir, your most obed. & very hble Serv.

J.H. Presid

P.S. Octr. 7th. Since writing the foregoing Congress have passed several other Resolves which I enclose. They have also received a Letter from Genl. Putnam, a Copy of which with the Resolve in Consequence thereof I forward to you.<sup>2</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:770.

<sup>2</sup> On October 6 Congress read a September 29 letter from Gen. Israel Putnam reporting that 3,000 British and German troops had recently arrived in New York City, that the British were apparently preparing to attack Peekskill, and that he needed reinforcements to defend this post. PCC, item 159, fols. 99-100. Consequently, on the same day Congress approved resolves asking Generals Gates and Washington to adopt the measures they deemed necessary to cope with these developments. Congress also adopted a resolve on the 6th concerning Gates' objections to certain financial claims in the northern department. *JCC*, 9:773-74, 776.

## John Hancock to Robert Morris

Dear Sir,

York, 5th Octr, 1777.

The Business allotted me by Congress after sitting till 9 o'clock last evening prevents me the honour and pleasure of waiting on you agreeable to your kind invitation and my wish. I have expresses going to Genl Gates, Genl Putnam and to Head Quarters: which makes me very busy.

The Inclos'd Letters for you and Coll Harrison I have just rec'd & judging it would be agreeable to you both to have them soon, I therefore dispatch one of my Expresses with them. I have not a word

of news to communicate. No Letters since you left us—Nor have we any reports to-day.

My good Friend, I should esteem it a very particular favr if you could without prejudicing your own stock, spare me a little Madeira, if it was only three dozen. I care not for price, for I feel awkward not to have it in my power to ask a friend to take a Glass. If you can oblige me I will send my light waggon. My best respects to Mrs Morris. Respects to my friend Coll Harrison & believe me very truly,  
Yours sincerely, John Hancock.

MS not found; reprinted from *NYHS Collections* 11 (1878):431.

### John Hancock to the New York Governor and Council

Gentlemen, York Town. Pennsylvania. Octr. 5th. 1777.

I have the Honour to enclose you a Resolve of Congress, from which you will percieve it is their Desire that a Monument should be erected to the Memory of the late Brigadier Genl. Harkemer; and that they request you will take proper Measures for carrying the Resolve into Execution. They have for this Purpose voted five Hundred Dollars.<sup>1</sup>

Every Mark of Distinction shewn to the Memory of such illustrious Men as offer up their Lives for the Liberty & Happiness of their Country, reflects real Honour upon those who pay the grateful Tribute; and by holding up to others the Prospects of Fame and Immortality will animate them to tread in the same Path. I have the Honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obed. & very hble Servt.

J H Presid.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A). Addressed: "To His Excellcy Geo Clinton Esqr. Govr. & to the State of New York. Sent by Mr. Troup."

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:770.

### John Hancock to Israel Putnam

Sir, York Town. Pennsylvania, October 5th. 1777.

I have Nothing in Charge from Congress at this Time, but to transmit the enclosed Resolves relative to the Commissary General's Department, which you will perceive are absolutely necessary for your Information, and the future Direction of your Conduct. They are so explicit that I shall not add, any farther than to request your Attention to them.<sup>1</sup>



I have the Honour to be, with great Respect, Sir, your most obed.  
& very hble Servt. J.H. Presid.

P.S. Octr. 7th. I was yesterday honored with your Favour of the 29th ulto. and immediately laid it before Congress; in Consequence of which they came to the enclosed Resolves on the Subject, to which & the other Resolves passed since the Date of this Letter, I beg Leave to refer your Attention. I have forwarded to Generals Washington & Gates Copies of your Letter with the Resolves of Congress passed in Consequence of it.<sup>2</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A). Addressed: "Honble Major Genl. Putnam at Peeks-Kill."

<sup>1</sup> For these resolves, which were passed on October 4 in response to letters from General Putnam and Deputy Commissary General of Purchases Peter Colt, see *JCC*, 8:724, 9:766-68; and PCC, item 159, fols. 87, 91.

<sup>2</sup> See Hancock to Horatio Gates, October 5, 1777, note 2.

## John Hancock to John Stark

Sir, York Town: Pennsylvania October 5th. 1777.

It is with the greatest Pleasure I transmit the enclosed Resolve of Congress, expressing the Thanks of that Body to you, and to the Officers and Troops under your Command, for the signal Victory you obtained over the Enemy in the late Battle at Benington. In Consideration of your distinguished Conduct on that Occasion, and the Service you rendered the Cause of Freedom and your Country, the Congress have been pleased to appoint you a Brigadier in the Army of the United States.<sup>1</sup> Be pleased to communicate to the Officers and Troops under your Command, this Mark of the Approbation of their Country for their Bravery in Defence of American Liberty. I enclose your Commission and have the Honour to be, with the greatest Esteem and Respect, Sir, your most obed. & very hble Servt.<sup>2</sup>

John Hancock Presidt

RC (NH). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:770-71.

<sup>2</sup> This day Hancock wrote, but did not send, the following letter to Washington:

"I have the Honour to transmit you the enclosed Resolves relative to the Commissary General's Department, and sundry other Subjects, and beg Leave to refer your Attention to them.

"The spirited and successful Conduct of Genl. Stark, Colonels Gansevoort and Willit has induced Congress to vote them the Thanks of their Country, & I have forwarded Copies of the Resolves accordingly.

"The very uncertain & imperfect Accounts of the Situation of the two Armies for some Days past, makes the Congress extremely desirous of hearing from you, in order that they may know their real State and Movements." PCC, item 12A, fols. 290-91.

Hancock probably decided not to send this letter because it may have seemed inappropriate in view of the reports of the battle of Germantown on October 4 that soon reached Congress. However, he did incorporate its first paragraph into his October 7 letter to Washington, printed below.

## James Lovell to Horatio Gates

Dear Sir,

York Town Octr. 5th. 1777

I will not omit sending you a few Lines by so good an Opportunity as the present, though I am but poorly fitted with any agreeable Subject in this Part of the Continent. In Truth, if you would give Bourgoin a little Leisure to exercise his Talents at Farce Writing which he discovered in the Boston Blockade, he would furnish the World with a Winter Evenings Entertainment at the Expence of Congress at least if not of Congress & General Washington. The Flight to Baltimore was a Trifle compared with the present Jaunt & Situation. We have put our selves under the Commissary & Quarter Masters General for Subsistence. I wish this was the worst of Things in this Quarter. For my own Share I expect to hear day after some new advantage gained by the Enemy. They will shortly have the River wholly at Command having taken the Delaware Frigate with wch. they may get Possession of the other two if they are not burnt. Burlington, Bristol &c &c will feel the Smart of the plundering War which the Enemy may easily carry on by their Water Craft. This is an exceedingly disagreeable Posture of Affairs to what we had a Title to expect from Appearances one month ago. Your Army & the eastern Militia are now strongly contrasted with those in the middle State even by the Inhabitants of Philadelphia. It is said Howe would not have passed more than 70 Miles from the Ships which landed him, in his whole Skin in yr. neighbourhood, or among Yankee Stone-walls. I make great Allowance for his having been conducted by Galloway through the most toryfied Part of Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup> Our springs all from the Northward, and almost all our Confidence.

The Congress left Philada. the 19th at 2 oClock A.M. I returned from Bristol to the Capital to dine, and tarried till the 25th; when the Enemy being within a mile & without any opposing Troops in the City, I Slipt into the Jerseys. It was lucky that I had a young Lady to gallant thither; for 3 or 4 Officers who left Philada. before me were taken on the Franckfort Road.

I am greatly surprized at one anecdote relative to an Officer in yr. Department whose *Sober* Services would promote your Glory as well as his own: But whose Indiscretion may do you [Hurt?] while assuredly it will ruin his own Fame.

By the Winter the middle Army will be divided into Greanites & Mifflineans, if Things do not take a great Turn from their present

Situation. Poor Put will be Stripped of his Army, and then be damned for not doing Something while Howe is in Philada. Verily our Salvation must come from afar. Upon the present ill Aspect, some People in Congress Seem to intend to reform their mode of doing or rather *not*-doing Business, and I believe we shall be able to get speedily thro' the Articles of Confederation, and shall sit faithfully about the Means of keeping our Currency in some sort of Credit. I know nothing radical for this purpose but Taxation, high & payable at short Periods. Every Thing else is only a Palliative.

I wish for the Sake of a most deserving Woman & lovely young Children, you could contrive to do something for one of my old Jail-Mates, now a Lieutenant in yr. Army—Richard Carpenter. He is bold as a Lion in our Cause; but I have only my Wife's Assertion that he is intirely altered from what he appeared in the days of his Confinement, when *non procul atrita pendebat Cantharus ansa*.<sup>2</sup> His Orthography is by no means his greatest Recommendation, as you will See by the inclosed. I have given you the only two unfavourable Hints I knew respecting him. If he proves my Wife's account true he is worthy of yr Notice, and I will own myself his Friend. The Gentleman who delivers this has received an Advantage from yr Recommendation, but as there was an old Resolution upon the Journals that "Congress would take an early opportunity to promote Majr. Livingston," which was not recollected, when a motion in his favour was made upon his coming to tell from Genl. Schyler what Genl. Lincoln had written about Brigadr. Stark's Fighting, this Opportunity when Mr. Throop came properly from a Battle was taken to bring into Effect the mentioned Record. Thus both the Young Gentlemen are promoted. I hope Stark will not make the same Puzzle as another Officer has made about the Date of his new Rank,<sup>3</sup> For I think it impossible that in one Case or the Other Congress should antedate without the greatest Confusion. One Case had been absolutely determined before any Knowledge of the Anecdote which I have before hinted at, which would have fixed me if I had not been fixed before. I fear that Sprightly Gentlemen will be duped, by an artful Senior now disgraced, so as to become a Tool for base Purposes. I will do my best that neither one or the other shall detract from your Reputation here, if they should basely attempt it. You ought not to suffer yourself to be embarrassed there a moment after Discovery of plain Intention in any man to do it.

We have no Prints in this Place or I would forward them. I hope one or two late alterations with the Power of filling Places will make the Commissary and Quartermasters Departments of some better use to you than they have been lately.

I will not urge you to be particular to me till you have more Leisure than you had when Mr. Throop left you, but be assured that I am, Sir, Your Friend & Most humb Servt. James Lovell



RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> For an examination of Joseph Galloway's suggestions for prosecuting the war against the Americans and the assistance he provided the British during the 1777 campaign, see John E. Ferling, "Joseph Galloway's Military Advice: A Loyalist's View of the Revolution," *PMHB* 98 (April 1974): 171-88.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to Carpenter's drinking habit. The quotation from Virgil pertains to Silenus who lay sleeping after a debauch—and "not far away his flagon hung by its worn handle." Virgil *Eclogues* 6.16-17.

<sup>3</sup> John Stark, who had previously resigned in a promotion dispute, was appointed a brigadier general on October 4. See *JCC*, 9:770-71. See also George Frost to Josiah Bartlett, August 19, 1777, note 2. The other "Officer" is probably Benedict Arnold, whose seniority of rank was still unresolved. *JCC*, 8:623-24, 9:896, 981.

## John Penn to Richard Caswell

Sir, York Town. October 5th. 1777. Sunday Morning

Your Favour of the 2d September I this minute received and am glad to hear that the money, tho' very late has arrived.<sup>1</sup> The Congress left Philadelphia about the 20th and are now at this place doing business. Our military affairs have taken an unexpected turn, Genl Howe is in possession of Philadelphia, without a second battle, this in some measure has been owing to very great rains that happened on the instant of the armies engaging, as our Soldiers are without Tents, the baggage having been sent some distance. Their Guns and Powder were so wet that Genl Washington was obliged to retire some distance to refit, and get other Powder &c. I understand that Genl Howe has not suffered his Troops to march into the City, and has done little violence as yet to any of the Inhabitants.

Genl. Washington's Army is greatly reinforced by the militia from Virginia, and the Jerseys, so that I expect it will not be long before he attacks the Enemy. I am not able to give you an account whether the Enemy or we are in possession of the Delaware, not having heard for several days.

Genl Burgoyne and his army are in a situation very critical, He having lately met with a repulse in an attack on Genl Gates who has upwards of 9000 men with him and 6 or 7000 behind Burgoyne under the command of Genl Lincoln. We have taken the greater part of the Enemy's water craft, and are in possession of the lines near Ticonderoga, so that we expect that Fort is in our possession again, as it was besieged more than ten days ago. It is said Burgoyne has not more than 6 or 7000 soldiers with him. The Indians have all declared on our side, and of course left him. Should we be able to destroy that army Genl Howe must retire to New York, or run a very great risk of suffering that place to fall into our hands, as he cannot keep that and Philadelphia without the assistance of Burgoyne.



The Inhabitants of this State are much divided in their sentiments. They are all Tories, the way that Genl Howe marched, they wish him success but have not courage to join his army.

I was lately at Camp, where your son was well. I am in hopes soon to be able to give you a more pleasing account of our affairs here. I shall apply to Congress to give some directions relative to the Pork you mentioned, to morrow.<sup>2</sup> I am with due respect, Sir, your Obt servt,  
J. Penn

Tr (Nc-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> This letter is in *N.C. State Records*, 11:602.

<sup>2</sup> In his September 2 letter, Governor Caswell had asked Penn for directions on how to dispose of almost 1,000 barrels of pork he had purchased in pursuance of a congressional resolve. Penn conferred with Commissary General of Purchases William Buchanan, who wrote a letter to Caswell on October 17 and asked him to send the pork to Pennsylvania. *Ibid.*, p. 656.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris

(In Committee for foreign Affairs)

Honorable Gentlemen.

York Town Pennsylvania Octr. 6th 1777

Since ours to you by return of the Packet from New Hampshire and duplicates by Mr. McCreary from Maryland, we have not written, nor have we received any of your favors during the last two months, except a letter of old date (Apr. 29th) signed by Mr. Deane & Doctr. Lee.<sup>1</sup> Capt. Hammond being not yet arrived, altho he sailed in April, makes it too probable that he has either fallen into the hands of the enemy or miscarried at sea. Two reasons have prevented us from writing hitherto—because from your assurances we had room to expect a monthly packet, and because the progressive state of the war gave us reason to look daily for some more decisive event than had happened, and which might warrant the expence of a particular packet, as the usual conveyance by merchant vessels is almost intirely stopt by the number & vigilance of the British cruisers.

We shall now give you an accurate detail of the war in the northern & middle departments where alone it has raged since our last. You were before apprized of the evacuation of Tyconderoga and of the retreat of our army from thence towards Albany. Genl. Bourgoins was rapid in pursuit of his successes, and pressed quickly on as far as Fort Edward upon Hudsons' River about 20 miles above Albany. Here his progress was interrupted by the American army which halted & was reenforced a little below him. This circumstance with the following events have continued that interruption, and bid fair to render *abortive at least* the great advantages expected by our

Enemies from their first successes on the Lakes. The better to effect his purpose, Genl. Bourgoine had detached General St. Leiger, with a body of regular troops, Canadians and Indians, by the Oneida Lake & Wood Creek to take fort Schuyler, (formerly Stanwix) and to make an impression along the Mohawk river. This part of the plan has been totally defeated by the Bravery of Genl. Harkimer with the Tryon County militia, and by the gallant defence of Fort Schuyler by Coll. Gansevort & Lt. Coll. Willet. The former of these met the Enemy in the field, defeated them, and killed a great number of their Indian Allies. This defeat being obtained by militia, they dispersed as usual, and left the enemy to collect & lay seige to Fort Schuyler; which was defended with great gallantry by the two Officers above mentioned, untill the approach of Genl. Arnold with a body of troops occasioned the enemy to raise the seige of that fortress, & retreat with great precipitation, leaving their baggage, ammunition, provisions & some artillery, wch. fell into our hands. Another body of troops was detached by Genl. Bourgoine under command of Lt. Coll. Baum to the Eastward, for the purpose of collecting horses to mount the Troopers, provisions & Teams for the use of the army. This detachment was met, attacked & defeated by the brave Genl. Stark and the New Hampshire Militia at a place called Bennington, and now rendered famous by the total overthrow of 1500 regular troops (posted behind works & fortified with cannon) by 2000 militia. The two wings of Mr. Bourgoin being thus cut off his body remained inactive until the 19th of last month when he moved on to attack Genl. Gates who commands the northern Army and was well posted at the Heights above Behmus's. The Consequence of this attack you will see related by Genl. Gates himself among the inclosures, as well as the account of our successes in the rear of the enemy on the Lakes George & Champlain by Col. Brown who had been detached for the purpose by Genl. Lincoln, who is also in Genl. Bourgoin's Rear with a strong body of troops. Thus surrounded on all sides, with little prospect of safe retreat, and a strong army in front growing stronger every day by reenforcemts. we hope e'er long to be able to give you information of definitive success over the British army in that quarter. An aid of Genl. Gates who brought these last accounts tells us that, by the concurring testimony of prisoners, deserters, & our own people who have escaped from the enemy their loss could not be less than 1000 or 1200 Men, in killed, wounded & missing, and that Genl. Bourgoine himself was wounded in the shoulder by a rifle-ball.

In the middle department the war has been less favorable to us, as you will see by what follows. About the middle of Augst. the British Fleet appeared in Cheseapeak Bay and landed Genl. Howe's army at the head of Elke, about 50 miles from Philadelphia. Genl. Washington's army, which had crossed the Delaware on the embarkation of the British army and the appearance of the Fleet off the capes of that

river, now proceeded to meet the enemy, and came up with them near Wilmington. After various skirmishes & manœuvres, a general engagement took place at Chad's Ford over the Brandywine on the 11th of Sept<sup>r</sup> last. This battle terminated in leaving the enemy in possession of the field with nine peices of our artillery. Our loss in killed, wounded & missing did not exceed 600. That of the enemy, as far as we have been able to get information was near 2000. An orderly book taken from them since the battle makes it 1900. Genl. Washington retreated across the Schuylkill, and, having refreshed his army, recrossed that river in two days after the former battle, with design to attack the enemy, who had remained close by the field of action until he came up wth. them again. To be the better prepared for battle, and to be guarded against the consequences of a defeat, our army marched without baggage and left their Tents behind. In this situation, and just in the moment of beginning an attack upon the enemy, a heavy long-continued & cold rain with high wind came on, and prevented it. The ammunition in the cartridge boxes was all rendered unfit for use, the arms injured, and the troops a good deal hurt & dispirited. In this situation of things it became necessary to retire from before the enemy to a place of safety, in order to clean the arms, replace the cartridges and refresh the men. The enemy were also without Tents, but they have good blankets, are better cloathed than our men, and have tin receptacles to keep dry their cartridges. Genl. Howe, judging of our situation, put his army in motion, and endeavoured to harrass & distress us by marches, countermarches and frequent shews of designing to give battle. After a Variety of manœuvres, the enemy crossed Schuylkill below our army, and, marching to Philadelphia, have possessed themselves of that city. Genl. Washington, having refreshed & rested his troops, and being reenforced, is now moving towards the enemy. This unfortunate rain has injured our affairs considerably by having thrown a number of our men into hospitals, and by the distress and harrassment of our army consequent thereon. However, they are recovering again and we hope e'er long to give Genl. Howe reason to repent his possession of Philadelphia. The real Injury to America from the Loss of that City is not so great as some are apt at first view to imagine, unless the reports and misconceptions of this matter in Europe should too much dispirit our friends and inspirit our enemies. But we rely on your careful & just representation of it to prevent the ill impressions it may otherwise make.

When this contest first began we foresaw the probability of losing our great towns on the water, and so expressly told our enemies in the address of the first Congress but we are blessed with an extensive Seacoast by which we can convey & receive benefits independent of any particular Spot. And it is very far from being clear to us that the enemy will be able to hold Philadelphia, as we are yet masters of the



Delaware below, and have hopes of keeping it, so as to prevent the British fleet from getting up to the City. Should this be the case Genl. Howe's visit cannot be of long duration.

You say that "the vessels of the United States will be received at the Havannah as those of France, the most favored nation."<sup>2</sup> We wish to be exactly informed whether north American products may be carried thither, or Prizes taken to, & disposed of in that port, or any other port of his catholic Majesty in America. You likewise mention a late Draught of the Mississippi taken for the Government of Gr. Britain. We are desirous of being furnished with a copy. It is with pleasure we read your assurance of sending the soldiers cloathing and other materials for the army, in time to meet the approaching cold season. They will be greatly wanted. As the degree of success the enemy have met with this year will probably support the hopes of a vindictive court, and occasion the straining of every Nerve for the accomplishment of its tyrannic views, we doubt not your most strenuous exertions to prevent Gr. Britain from obtaining Russian or German Auxiliaries for the next campaign; And we think with you that it is an object of great importance to cultivate & secure the friendship of his Prussian Majesty, as well for the preventing this evil, as for obtaining his public recognition of our Independence, and leave of his ports for the purposes of commerce & disposal of Prizes. The original Papers which you mention in a triplicate to have sent, never came to hand; so that we can only make conjectures as to the disposition of that Monarch.<sup>3</sup>

The marine force of the enemy is so considerable, in these seas, & so overproportionate to our infant navy, that it seems quite necessary and wise to send our ships to distress the commerce of our enemies in other parts of the world. For this purpose, the marine committee have already ordered some vessels to France under your directions as to their future operation, and we expect more will be sent.<sup>4</sup> But our Frigates are not capable of carrying much bulky commodity for commercial purposes, without unfitting them for war, besides the consideration of our being obliged to get them away how & when we can or endanger their being taken, which prevents our sending them to those Staple Colonies where the commodities wanted are to be obtained. The reciprocal benefits of Commerce cannot flow from or to N. America until some maritime power in Europe will aid our cause with marine strength; and this circumstance gives us pain, least it should be considered on our part as unwillingness to pay our debts, when the truth is that we have the greatest desire of doing so, have materials in abundance, but not the power of conveying them. This leads us to reflect on the great advantages that must unavoidably accrue to all parties if France & Spain were to afford effectual aid on the Sea, by loan or sale of Ships of war, according to the former propositions of Congress; or, if the Farmers General could be prevailed



on to receive in America the Tobacco or other products of this northern continent which France may want.

We are, Gentlemen, Your most humb. Servts,

Benja Harrison	Richard Henry Lee
Robt Morris	Thos Heyward Junr.
Jno Witherspoon	James Lovell

P.S. Octr. 9th. On the 4th an engagement between the two armies took place near Germantown, the circumstances of which may be seen by the inclosed papers numbered 6, 7, 8.

RC (PPAmP). Written by Lovell and signed by Lovell, Harrison, Heyward, Lee, Morris, and Witherspoon.

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> In a March 18, 1777, letter to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, Arthur Lee had reported: "I am assured of having credit from time to time on Holland, and that orders will be given to receive your vessels at the Havana as those of the most favored nation, the French, are received." Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:292.

<sup>3</sup> For Arthur Lee's reports on his activities as American commissioner in Berlin, see Lee to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, June 11 and July 29, 1777. *Ibid.*, 2:335-36, 369-72.

<sup>4</sup> In their May 26 letter to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, Benjamin Franklin and Silas Deane had urged Congress to send several vessels to Europe to carry the war to British homewaters. *Ibid.*, 2:325-27. See also Marine Committee to John Paul Jones, September 6, 1777.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris

(In Committee for foreign Affairs)

Honorable Gentlemen York Town, Pensylvania, Octr. 6th. 1777.

We shall follow yr. example in confining this letter entirely to yours of May 26th<sup>1</sup> respecting the Loan and mode of raising it by appropriation of vacant lands. It remains doubtful yet whether there is any vacant land not included within some one of the thirteen states: And it is an undetermined question of great magnitude whether such land is to be considered as common stock or the exclusive property of the state within whose charter bounds it may be found. Until this business shall have been determined in Congress and approved by the states, you will readily discover the difficulty of doing any thing in the way of raising money by appropriation of vacant land. We consider your proposal on this subject as of very great importance, and we shall not fail to solicit the attention of Congress thereto whenever the pressing business of the campaign will permit.<sup>2</sup> In the mean time, we see no reason that should prevent the young Nobleman of Irish ex-

tract from coming to America; because the suspension of the question concerning vacant lands will not obstruct his views of getting the quantity he may want, either by original entry, or by purchase on the most reasonable terms upon the frontiers of those states where vacant lands are in abundance to be met with.

We are warranted to say that such rank as that Nobleman may have when he leaves service in Europe will be granted to him here.

Congress clearly discern with you the all important concern of supporting the credit of our continental money, and, with this view, have proposed, as you will see by the inclosed resolve to pay the interest of twenty millions of dollars by bills drawn on you. This we hope will in time replenish the Loan Offices so effectually, as, with the aid of taxation now generally taking place, to prevent the necessity of future emissions.<sup>3</sup>

By your letter of the 25th of May we have no doubt but that those bills will be paid with all due punctuality.<sup>4</sup> About 5 millions only of the twenty voted are yet borrowed, and the interest on these 5 will not to be drawn for in bills of exchange till near a twelve month.

We are, Gentlemen, Your humble Servants.

Benja Harrison	Richard Henry Lee
Robt Morris	James Lovell
Jno Witherspoon	Thos. Heyward Junr.

RC (PPAmP). Written by Lovell and signed by Lovell, Harrison, Heyward, Lee, Morris, and Witherspoon.

<sup>1</sup> The commissioners' letter of May 26 dealing with the appropriation of vacant land has not been found.

<sup>2</sup> The question of the ownership and control of western lands had been debated many times. Efforts to give Congress exclusive control over the western boundaries of the states in the Articles of Confederation were conclusively defeated on October 15, 1777. *JCC*, 9:806-9.

<sup>3</sup> The committee undoubtedly enclosed the September 10 resolve authorizing the payment of interest on loan office certificates in bills of exchange drawn on the American commissioners at Paris. *JCC*, 8:730-31.

<sup>4</sup> The commissioners' May 25 letter to the Committee of Secret Correspondence is in Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:322-25.

## Elbridge Gerry to James Warren

My dear sir, York Town in Pennsylv. 6th Octr 1777

I am favoured with yours of Sepr. 15th<sup>1</sup> & suppose that eer this will reach You the Orders of the Commercial Committee,<sup>2</sup> for the Disposal of the several Cargoes consigned to You by Messers Gardoquis, will be received. The Anchors & Cordage will of Course be delivered to your navy Board; & with respect to the Duck, Medicines, & Salt, I

think it will be the surest Way, to deliver to the Board what is immediately wanted of each, & inform Congress thereof, together with the Necessity that led to this Measure. My Reason for this proposal is that the Disposition already made of these Cargoes, will require a Reconsideration, wch Committees as well as Congress are generally averse to: whereas, there will be no Difficulty in approving your Conduct, when evidently founded on the Necessity of the Case. The Blankets, I fear, cannot be spared from the army. A timely application to the marine Board for such other Articles as may be wanted, which should be particularly enumerated, will produce the Order which You desire.

Since my last, some of the Important Events that have taken place, prove, that those of war are very uncertain. From Circumstances whether favourable or unfortunate, We are apt to expect similar Consequences; & the reverse frequently happens; from whence We may learn, in Times of prosperity, Caution, & of Adversity, perseverance & a firm Resolution not to despond. The Loss of Philadelphia, which In the End I think will be a salutary Event, is owing under providence to several Causes. The Misbehaviour of the Militia of Pennsylvania is one, & is attributed to the Militia Act, which invests the people with the power of appointing the regimental officers. Be the Cause what it may, nothing could equal their Timidity; As I am informed by some of the principal Inhabitants of the State that twenty five Hessians put to Flight two Regiments at the Battle of the Brandywine, & that when the General ordered them to supply the place of a Brigade, which he had ordered from Chads Ford to reinforce General Sullivan at Jones Ford, they refused to comply with his orders from apprehensions of *Danger*, & by those means put the Enemy in Possession of our Lines, wch they would not have attempted to attack, had they been properly manned. Another Cause is said to have been the Circumstance of the Country thro which the Enemy marched to the City, it being inhabited by Tories, who gave the best of Intelligence to the Enemy, & deceived General Washington. These are undoubted Facts, & by the best Information that I can get, there is not such a Collection of disaffected people on the Continent, as of the quakers inhabiting that part of Pennsylvania. The Disputes about the Constitution of this State, have produced such a Division & Torpor thro out the same, as renders it at present an inactive, lifeless, unwieldy, Mass. Thus much for this State; & the Militia of Maryland & Delaware are but little better, but the principal Cause of their obtaining the City without a second Battle, which at the Time of my writing my last Letter was hourly expected, was a heavy rain that happened on the Day of the Meeting of the Armies, & after their advanced parties were engaged; this obliged them to retire, & the Baggage of our Army was so far distant, that the Tents could not be procured; by which Means all the Ammunition of the Soldiers was



destroyed, their Arms hurt, & the Army so injured, that they were under the Necessity of marching the next Day twenty Miles into the Country to avoid a Battle; which must have been fought on our Side by Bayonets & Artillery only. But I am apprehensive, that the Vanity of the southern States, which has produced such Instances of Invective against the eastern officers & Troops whenever they have misbehaved, stimulated them to oppose General Howe with as little Assistance as possible from the eastern States, that they might have had the Opportunity of boasting how much the united States owed their Liberties to the southern, who opposed themselves to the main Army of the Enemy. This I am led to beleive, from the Declarations that were made previous to the Battle of the Brandywine, & likewise from the Neglect to draw off more Troops from Peeks Kill when the Enemy landed at Elk; but since the late Occurrences, Reason seems to have taken place, the eastern officers & Troops are highly spoken of, the others indifferently by their own People, & I hope that each will be convinced, that a party Spirit is not Only unprofitable but destructive to both. Generals Washington & Mifflin are however ever averse to such a Spirit.

We have heard from the northern Army & I congratulate You on the Success of Colo Brown, & the good Conduct of our Troops in the Action of the 19th Sepr; We are in daily Expectation of some decisive Action in that Quarter, which may be very important.

By a Letter from General Putnam of the 29th Sepr. he supposed that a Reinforcement of three thousand Men had arrived at New York & that more were expected; if so, we must increase our Exertions to meet the most vigorous Efforts & perhaps the last that our Enemies can make. He recd his Information from one of our field officers which he has lately exchanged, but I strongly suspect & hope that it will turn out to be a Feint, & that the Transports were sent from the Enemy's Fleet, when they arrived at the Capes of Virginia, for this purpose. A Fleet consisting of sixty Sail was seen the 25th of August in the Latitude of the Capes, standing with the Wind at S S E to the Eastward, & is probably the same that arrived at New York, but You will undoubtedly be able to ascertain the Fact, by the Time this reaches You.

General Washington on the Morning of the 4th Instant about 1/2 past 5 surprized the Enemy's Camp at German Town; the particulars We have not yet recd or a Line from the General; but a Mr McClure who is a reputable Citizen of Baltimore, & as a Volunteer was in both the Actions of Prince Town & the Brandywine, & also in this, declares that it by far exceeds the others. By his Account our army advanced in three Divisions, the left of which did not come up for Reasons unknown, the other two attacked the Enemy, drove them thro German Town to their Lines, & attacked them therein for a considerable Time, untill the General ordered them to retreat. The



Carnage he says was great, & particularly on the side of the Enemy; General Nash is wounded, & General Sullivans Brigade Majors are said to be mortally wounded. I suppose his aid de Camps are intended, the wounded were brot off, & a Field peice of the Enemy's. Our Troops behaved with great Bravery. This is confirmed by a Letter wch General Mifflin, who is sick at Redding recd from an officer in his Department & forwarded to Congress. You will soon have more authentic accounts & I hope they will be agreeable from this as well as other quarters.

General Howe has issued a proclamation confirming his promises of protection & pardon to such of the Inhabitants of the middle States as remained in their Homes & returned to their Allegiance in Consequence of his proclamation when he landed at Elk, & *as shall continue to merit it by their future Behavior* & excluded all other persons whatever from the Benefit thereof; this shews what the Consequences of a Conquest Would be, more than Volumes could do on the Subject.<sup>3</sup> With the heartiest Wishes for your Health & Happiness I remain sir yours very sincerely,

E Gerry

[P.S.] One of the Continental Ships in the Delaware was brot against the City, & by some Means unknown to us at present, has fallen into the Hands of the Enemy. A 20 Gun Ship, [10?] Gun Brig & 700 hhd's Rum with abt 200 of Sugar was taken by Capt Biddle in the Randolph at So Carolina.

8th. Inclosed is a Copy of a Letter from General Washington containg an authentic Account of the action of the 4th.<sup>4</sup> I must beg the Favour of your requesting the Hona Assembly to send a Member to supply my place in Congress abt the 1st of December, as my Health requires some relaxation from Business.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Warren's September 15 letter to Gerry is in Gardiner, *Warren-Gerry Correspondence*, pp. 81-82.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> For Gen. William Howe's September 28 proclamation, see Evans, *Am. Bibliography*, No. 15324.

<sup>4</sup> Washington's October 5 letter to President Hancock containing an account of the battle of Germantown was read in Congress on October 8. See *JCC*, 9:782; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:308-11.

## John Hancock to John Nixon

Sir,

York Town: Pennsylvania, October 6th. 1777.

I have received your Favour wherein you request Leave to resign on Account of Indisposition, and immediately laid it before Congress. In Consequence of which I have it in Charge to inform you that they

have at present in Consideration of the Services you have rendered the Cause of Freedom and your Country, declined accepting your Resignation.<sup>1</sup> It is their Wish that you would spend some Time in travelling thro New England, or any other Part of America that may be most agreeable. Should you after this Excursion find your Health no better, the Congress will in that Case, tho with Reluctance, consent to your retiring from the Army. With the warmest Wishes for a Restoration of your Health, that you may be thereby enabled to render still further Services to your Country, I have the Honour to be, with great Respect, Sir, your most obed Serv.

J.H. Presid.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A). Addressed: "Honble Brigadr. Genl. Nixon."

<sup>1</sup> There is no mention in the journals of General Nixon's letter or Congress' response to it.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir,

York 6th Octobr. 1777

Mukinfus will be Sent off the day after tomorrow & will probably be with you before Sir Patrick Houston who will do me the favour to deliver this which I shall employ chiefly to acknowledge the receipt of your several favors of the 2d, 10th, 16th & 29th August & 1st & 11th September<sup>1</sup> & in my next or as soon as possible will give Special answers.

The attention of thinking Men is now to the next Step of General Washington. A few days longer delay to dispossess General Howe of Philadelphia & greatly reduce the British Army will lay a foundation for continuing the Campaign through the Winter at a very great expense & hazard to us. The Enemy will be Master of much the greatest part of this & the State of Delaware & too probably have a clear road through Jersey to New York. The War will in that event be protracted.

Events of War are uncertain & desperate, Men 'though few in number have performed wonders. Mr. Burgoyne is hemmed in on every Side, 'tis possible himself & his whole army I mean the Survivors may find it necessary to surrender themselves prisoners. 'Tis possible & in all appearance barely possible to cut their way through to New York. To escape by way of the Lakes seems now to be impracticable as we have destroyed the principal part & have possession of the remainder of their Navigation. Admitting the destruction of his Army we shall have some thousands of Men to employ in the Winter or early in the Spring before reinforcements can arrive from Britain against New York & the Cantonments of General Howe's Army.

Upon the whole the blunder of General Sullivan in the battle of

Brandywine & the unpardonable negligence of General Wayne have reduced the American States to the present dilemma.<sup>2</sup> If the former had been as Wise as he is allowed to be brave the latter would not have been disgraced by a Surprize when he ought to have been upon his Arms nor should we have heard any more of General Howe but his hurrying fragments of Regiments & Men on board his fleet. As I believe whatever is, is best so I hope all our miscarriages will work benefits & that we shall Soon recover our former ground.

My Compliments to Mrs. Gervais & the Children & to Mr. & Mrs. Manigault & other friends &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Extracts from Gervais' August 2 and 16 letters are in *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 66 (January 1965): 19-23.

<sup>2</sup> John Sullivan had allowed the British to outflank him at the battle of Brandywine on September 11, and Anthony Wayne had been in command of the American division that was surprised by the British at Paoli during the night of September 20-21.

## John Penn to Richard Caswell

Dear Sir,

Octob. 6. 1777

This minute we had an Express from Head Quarters and are informed that General Washington had harangued his army, who promised to follow him where he pleased. The Express says the Soldiers are in high spirits, and that the General has promised them the plunder &c of the Tories in the City for two days if they defeat Howe's Army, and that the Genl. is determined to attack Howe, who is in the City. I do not mention this as a fact, but it seems to be generally believed here. You will observe from Howes proclamation that he thinks he has ruined us by refusing to continue his days of grace, no more pardons to be granted. I hope soon to write your excellency something that will be worth reading. I am with due respect, Sir,  
Your obt. Servt. J. Penn

[P.S.] This in haste in the street.

RC (MH-H). Endorsed: "John Penn Esqr. 6 October with Copy of Howes procla. of 28 Sept. 1777."

## John Adams to Abigail Adams

York Town Octr. 7. 1777

I have no Time, nor Accommodations to write of late—besides I seldom know what to write, and when I do, I dont love to write it.

One Thing is now becoming more and more certain every day. That is that our People will and do fight, and altho they make a clumsy Hand of it, yet they do better and better.

I am lodged in the House of General Roberdeau, an Israelite indeed, I believe, who, with his sisters and Children and servants, do every Thing to make Us happy. We are highly favoured. No other Delegates are so well off.

I am as well as usual. Your Dream will never come to pass. You never can be coolly received by me, while my Heart beats and my senses remain. I had no Letter from you by the last Post.

Yours, yours, yours,

John Adams

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:352.

## Board of War to George Washington

Sir War Office York Town Octr. 7th. 1777

I have the Honour to enclose by Direction of the Board a Number of Certificates relating to the Bearer Capt. Thomas Rowland who is sent to your Excellency to exhibit his Experiments before you or such Persons as you shall appoint. On his Return he will bring your Certificates of his Performance & Opinion of the Utility of his Scheme. It appears to the Board that the Plan proposed by Mr. Rowland will be useful or they would not have troubled your Excellency with the Matter especially as many Persons have claimed your Attention when Speculations have been either ingenious without Utility or merely calculated to get Money from the Public. The Board have furnished Mr. Rowland with a Sum of Money to bear his Expences & leave it to you either to employ him at Camp or send him back as you shall think proper.<sup>1</sup>

The Board request you will be pleased to point out to them such Regulations in Regard to the Pay & Appointments of Messieurs du Portail, de la Radiere, de Laumoy & du Guvion as are suitable to their Rank & the Nature of their Employment as Engineers.

I have the Honour to be, with the greatest Respect, your very obed  
Serv,

Richard Peters Secy

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Although Washington reported in his October 11 letter to John Page that Rowland was "to make some Experiments to day," the board's letter was later endorsed: "Ansd. 15th. Capt. Rowlands invention not usefull." Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:354-55. Washington's reply has not been found and the nature of Rowland's "Experiments" has not been ascertained.



## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir,

York Town: Pennsylvania October 7th. 1777

I have the Honour to transmit to you the inclosed Resolves relative to the Commissary Generals Department, and sundry other Subjects, to which I shall only refer your Attention.<sup>1</sup>

I forward likewise, agreeably to the Order of Congress, a Copy of a Letter from Genl. Putnam, by which you will perceive he apprehends an Attack is meditated against the Post at Peek's Kill, & the other Defences on Hudson's River.<sup>2</sup>

A Report prevails that last Saturday you had a severe Engagement with the Enemy, the Particulars of which we are anxiously expecting to hear every Moment.

Your Favour of the 3d Inst<sup>3</sup> I have been duely honoured with and immediately laid it before Congress.

I have the Honour to be with the utmost Esteem & Respect Sir,  
Your most obedt. & very hble Servt.      John Hancock Presid.

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the October 4 resolves on the commissariat, Hancock also enclosed resolves of October 4 and 6 on Baron de Kalb, Chevalier Du Buysson, military appointments and honors, prisoner barracks, defense of the Hudson, and impressment powers of commissaries. *JCC*, 9:766-75.

<sup>2</sup> See Hancock to Horatio Gates, October 5, 1777, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> This letter is in PCC, item 152, 5:77-78, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:298-300.

## Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr.

Dr Papa,

8th October 1777. York

The inclosed copy of General Washington's letter to Col. Harrison<sup>1</sup> will give you Some insight into the event of the battle & causes of our miscarriage on Saturday last. It is evident that our men do not want resolution, but they want discipline, if they could have been rallied after the repulse from Chew's house & had renewed the attack when the fog cleared away, it is more than probable that the Enemy rather than risk another onset would have retreated to Chester. Soldiers can not be formed on a sudden, but were our officers better, they might be sooner formed. I am apprehensive the want of money, I mean of good money, will subject us to great difficulties & Such I fear as we shall find almost insurmountable. General Washington is now at Perkiomin 28 miles distant from Pha. Howe is at Chesnut Hill 9 miles from Pha. We this day recd. letters from Albany dated 29th Septr., all things there in Statu quo, except that Lincoln has joined Gates,

whose army is said to be 12000 strong, & Burgoyne 5 or 6 thousand. Gates I think should risk a battle or his militia tired of inaction & delay will soon return home. I am Sorry to inform you that there is misunderstanding between Gates & Arnold, which may possibly prejudice our affairs in that quarter; who is to blame I will not undertake to determine. I wrote you this morning & to Molly<sup>2</sup> & I believe acknowledge the receipt of yours & her letters of the 29th Sept.

The inclosed account brought by Major Clark it is said may be relied on: if it be true the Enemy must have Suffered considerably. The consternation was great in Pha. & the Tories were preparing for flight. We are on the Confederation: yesterday we determined the manner of voting: each State to have a vote: carried by ten States, N. Carolina divided: Virga. against it. Delaware not represented. Tomorrow we take up the rule for ascertaining the quotas of the Debt; when that question is determined we shall take up the affair of boundaries & back lands.

Gen. Nash is a loss; in my opinion he would have made an excellent officer in time; he was brave, modest, sensible, attentive, & good tempered.

By comparing several letters giving an account of the late action I find they all attribute the miscarriage to the Stand the Enemy made at Chew's house, which we wanted cannon to force, & to the fog, which made our enemy mistake some of their own parties for the Enemy.

When the Confederation is finished I hope Congress & the several States will take into their immediate consideration the recruiting our army, taxing, to bring monies into our treasuries, & supplying our soldiers with necessaries. We must draft from the militia to fill up our regular battalions, no other way I believe will be found to fill them, & to make this more palatable to the People all militia men must stand the draft.

I am in hopes that General Washington will again attempt something agt. the enemy, as he has recd. since the action a reinforcement of upwards of 1000 Virginians, but these are chiefly militia: unless the Enemy can recruit their army in Pha. they must be very weak in a short time, if frequently attacked. My love to Molly, Mrs Darnall & little ones. I wish you a long enjoy[men]t of health & am, yr. affectionate Son,

Ch. Carroll of Carrollton

RC (MdHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> Carroll's letter to his wife has not been found, but his brief letter to his father, containing "the Substance" of General Washington's October 5 report to President Hancock on the battle of Germantown, is in the Carroll Papers, MdHi.

## James Duane to George Clinton

Sir

York Town 8th Octobr. 1777

I wrote to you Yesterday<sup>1</sup> by Col. Troup giving your Excellency a general Account of a Battle fought on Saturday last at German Town between the American and British Armies. Victory seem'd at first to be promis'd to General Washington as a Reward for the spirited Attack which was Judiciously planned & pushed with great Gallantry. On every side the Enemy gave way: But a heavy Fog which totally obstructed all Communication Among our different divisions; and indeed destroy'd all distinction between Friends and Foes; seemingly in the midst of Conquest, put an End to all these sanguine Expectations by a sudden Retreat of our Troops. This it is supposed was occasion'd by the Left Wing of our Army's coming up & endeavouring to Join the other body; and each mistaking the other for a fresh Reinforcement of the Enemy. The Enemy however did not pursue, but permitted General Washington to retire with his Cannon, and wounded, at Leisure; venturing only, after some Cessation, to fire a few long shot from some pieces of Cannon. This is the Substance of General Washington's Letter receiv'd this moment in Congress where I write this short Account; not having it in my power to give you a *Copy* of his dispatches at large.

The Loss on either side is not ascertain'd. The Consequence the General infers from the Engagement is, that it will make his Troops familiar with danger, and more ready to attack as well as more determin'd and hardy in Action. In other Respects he observes that his situation is Just the same, as before the Battle, the Loss of men excepted, which is supposed to be fully compensated by the great Havock made among the Enemy.

When further Circumstances come to Light your Excellency shall be furnished with particulars. Tho' this last Battle cannot be called a fortunate Event it gives no discouragement. The State of Pensylvania however remains weak, feeble and inactive, & contributes little to the common Defence. The dissention concerning their frame of Government seems to have shaken all publick Virtue to the foundation. This between ourselves.

I have nothing to add, but to assure you that with great Respect, I am, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient huml Serv,

Jas. Duane

RC (MiDbEI).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.



## Eliphalet Dyer to Joseph Trumbull

Dear Sir

York Town Octobr 8th 1777

I wrote you a few days since from this place by Storer Your Express, since which Another Genll Action has happened between Genll Washington & the British Troops in this Quarter, the main body of which were posted about 2 miles this side German Town. Genll Washington finding Genll How had sent out a strong party to Attack Billingsport below Philadelphia & had left himself as Weak as he could expect to find him according made his disposition to Attack the Enemy early on Saturday Morning last in three Columns. Genll Sullivan to Command the right, Genll Conway to March in his front & before they reached the Enemy to file off to Attack them in their flank. Genll Armstrong with the Pensilvania Militia who marched with Genll Green was to have taken a small Circuit & come on upon the rear of the Enemies right. I forget who Commanded the Centre division, but Gills Wain & Maxwell were a body of reserve. It happened to be a very foggy morning & no wind. The Enemies Picket was Attackd a little before sun rise drove at once on upon the first part of their main Army which were their light Infantry, who soon gave way & Indeed their whole Army & were Successfully drove about two miles & for the space of more than 2 hours tho we were greatly embarrassed by the fog & thickness of the weather which with the smoke of the Cannon so darkned the air that the Enemy could not be distinguished nor our different persons see the Opperations of each other & sometimes taking friends for foes which was most unhappily the case in Genll Greens Division who fired on each other & threw each other into the great[est] Confusion avoiding each Other which Confusion catched from Column to Column. A Confused retreat took place & to rally them was Impossible tho our troops before had behaved with the greatest spirit & bravery, and a most Compleat Victory seemed full in prospect. Till this Unfortunate mistake occasioned by the fog Snatched it out of our hands the prospect was full, of our Army in a very few hours again entering Philadelphia but once more disappointed. The enemy were so wounded & disheartened as not to follow our retreat but only with a few long Shot but [their] Camp was again regained which was for sometime in our possession. We lost Nothing but carried off all our Stores & wounded. The seriousness of the mistake not at all dispirited (as the Genll writes) but eager again to renew the Attack. The Virginias & Others on the road had not arrived time enough to be in this Action but no doubt by this time have joined the Army which will much more we hope then make up our loss tho the Genll has not given us the Number yet says it is not very considerable. The Enemy they think must have suffered much, but at present have no returns. We expect Another Attack will soon be made on the Enemy. Hope we shall soon learn to beat



them. And after a few more severe Conflicts the Almighty may give us a Compleat Conquest over our Enemy in every Quarter. I forgot to Mention that Genll McDougall was in Greens division. Whether Coll Thos has joined his Regiment I know not as I cannot hear one word from him since you wrote me he had left home. My most sincere affection to Wife & family & regards to friends. Should be glad to hear from you as often as possible & to know our New Election of Delegates as soon as it happens. Mr. Redick is pursuing your affair and is delivering over Stores &c with all dilligence and Attention but meets with mony dificulties.<sup>1</sup> Great Waste & imbezlements believe have happened in this quarter. He has often wrote to Mr. Irwin & others Concerned to know what was purchased here & for receipts &c but says he can receive no Answer. The New Commiss. Insist on weight & measure in every thing. Much Wheat & flower is greatly damaged. I fear you may suffer much in this Country & Whether you will not be Obliged to come into this quarter your self to save much loss you will soon be able to Judgue. I find to my surprise that the Commissrs. for setling Accounts are ordered from Hartford to this Country. It is moved to be taken up again as the Inconveniencies you mention beside the danger in removing Your papers at so great a distance is readily seen by every one. I hope you will take all proper & reasonable care for your self. My kind affection to Mrs. Trumbull. I cannot but anticipate the pleasure & satisfaction (if Providence permit my return) I flatter my self I shall take in Visiting her at Norwich. I wish it was in my power to furnish her much better than the times will admit to keep house. But hope a Consideration of this will and my Absence will apologize for every Omission. Am Sincerely Yours,

E Dyer

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> Trumbull's agent David Redick petitioned Congress this day, requesting clarification of an October 4 resolve regarding delivery of wheat to the commissary general of purchases. See *JCC*, 9:769, 782; and *PCC*, item 42, 6:421.

## John Hancock to Dorothy Hancock

My Dear Dolly

York Town October 8th. 1777

I wrote you two long Letters of the 3d Inst.<sup>1</sup> which hope will reach you. On Saturday last General Washington attack'd General Howes Army near German Town, they were surprised & fled, & our Army pursued them, but a very thick Fog coming up, & by some other Accidents our Army was prevented entering into Philada. that day; General Howe it is said had given orders to the whole of his Troops to Retire to Chester; Our Troops are in high Spirits, & wishing for another Attack, I hope soon to be able to Send you agreeable Accotts.

I have this moment Rec'd an Express from General Washington, he only mentions the Action in General, not having been able to Collect particulars; as soon as I hear further you shall know, by the Reports there has been a great Slaughter on both Sides. Genl Washington writes that General Sullivan behaved most gallantly & has acquir'd great honour. This the General mentions from his own observation, as he was under his Eye the whole time. One or two Battles more will entirely Ruin Mr Howe's Army. The Waggons that went with you are Return'd, I have not seen any of the Men, I have Sent Dodd after George for the Pickles, hope to get them. Harry the Coachman went directly to the Enemy in Philada. & has Carried in Mr Tailor's money & Smith's the Express. A Number of Persons who staid in Philada. have been put in prison, among others Parson Duche, but we hear he has since been enlarged upon his Parole, we are told there are upwards of Five hundred Whigs in the Philada.Goal. I inclose you one of Genl Howe's Proclamations. When you have perus'd it Send it to Mr Bant & let him know the Contents of this as far as it Respects News, as I have not time to write him, in short I am so hurried & Engag'd that I have no time left for Relaxation. We have adopted a new mode of meeting in Congress, we begin at 10 oClock, set till one, then adjourn to 4 oClock, then meet again; but I dislike it, as we continue to Sit in the Eveng. I sat in the Chair yesterday & Conducted the Business Eight hours, which is too much, & after that had the Business of my office to attend to as usual. I cannot Stand it much longer in this way. I have been very unwell since you left me, but Thank God, I am much better, my appetite is return'd, & I do tolerably well. I am exceedingly happy in my Lodgings, I have the best in the place, & the Lady of the House very Agreeable, which makes my Scituation pleasant, she is vastly Obliging, & I am in hopes I shall prevail on her to Consent that I shall Dine at her Table (for I now only Breakfast with her) which will be more agreeable than dining every day at the Tavern. Mrs. Swoope (the Name of the Lady with whom I am) is earnest I should Send for you here, she very politely offer'd every Service in her power, & will Accommodate you in the best manner, I Tell her if I should be oblig'd to Spend the winter here, I shall certainly Send for you, but of that I cannot with certainty Judge; this is a pleasant Town, & if I had you with me, I should be very easy & happy but my Intention is for Boston as soon as the Campaign is over; however don't build upon this, for I may still be obliged to Send to desire you to Return. I have not heard a word from you, nor had a Line since the one by Dodd, except Mr Bant's Letter, which came to hand two days ago. I beg, My Dear, you will write me by all Oppors., you cannot plead the want of paper &c, as has been the case. I shall now establish this Rule in future with respect to my writing, Vizt. you may depend on having a Letter from me for every one of yours. This I will strictly adhere to, & you shall

never have occasion to Censure me for not keeping up to it. Pray have you paid a Visit to my Mother, I wish to hear how she enjoys her health, & how the Family is. Remember me to your Father, & the Family, and to all Friends as if nam'd. A Letter for you reach'd me yesterday. I found it inclos'd Letters for Genl St Clair with a few Lines from Mrs. Bayard. Do Take care of Violet, let her go & spend a little time in Boston among her Friends. I shall very soon come to a final Determination as to my future proceedings and you shall immediately be made Acquainted.

My Respects to all Friends, I wish to See them. I am call'd upon & must Close, & must Defer what I have further to Say to that happy time when I shall have the Satisfaction of Seeing you, which I hope will not be long first, either at this place or at Worcester.

I beg you will bear upon your mind constantly, that it gives me the highest pleasure & Satisfaction when I hear from you by Letter, & I hope that impression will produce a frequent attention to the object of it.

My best wishes attend you for every Felicity & I am with the utmost Affection, My Dear Girl, Yours for ever, John Hancock

RC (MdBj-G).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

## John Hancock to the Massachusetts General Court

Congress Chamber York Town in Pennsylv.

Honble Gentlemen,

October 8th. 1777

Before this reaches you, the particular Circumstances and reasons of the Departure of Congress from the City of Philadelphia must have come to your Knowledge, I shall therefore wave the Subject, and only Say that the Congress is tolerably well Accommodated in this place, and are now Conducting the Publick Business here.

On Saturday last, after General Washington had made the proper Dispositions for an Attack upon General Howe's Army, he with his Army proceeded to carry into Effect his Determination; all the particulars and Circumstances attending the Attack that have come to our knowledge, are contain'd in a Letter which I have this moment Rec'd by Express from General Washington, a Copy of which I have the Honour to Inclose you, & to which I Beg leave to Refer you. I have avail'd my self of the Orders given out by the General previous to the Attack; as also of a Proclamation lately Issued by General Howe, Copies of both I inclose you. As soon as any Material Occurrences Take place, you shall be made Acquainted.



Our Troops are in high Spirits & wishing for another Attack, I hope soon to be able to give you the pleasing Accott, of our Regain-  
ing Philadelphia.

I have the Honour to be with every Sentiment of Esteem & Respect,  
Honble Gentlemen, Your most Obedt Servt.

John Hancock Presidt.

[P.S.] I have it in Charge from Congress to Request, that you will be  
pleas'd to Enlarge Lieut Colonel Campbell on giving the same Parole  
that you have laid other officers under.<sup>1</sup>

RC (M-Ar). Addressed: "Hone Council of Massachus. Bay, & Assembly."

<sup>1</sup> Congress had passed a resolution to this effect on August 19, 1777. JCC, 8:653.

## John Hancock to the Massachusetts Council

Gentlemen

York Town 8 Octr. 1777 4 oClock P.M.

Since I wrote you in the mornng. A Gentleman of Veracity is Arriv'd,  
who has been at Camp, & informs that Genl Howe's Army has met  
with a most severe Blow, Genl. Agnew Kill'd, Coll. Walcott also  
Kill'd, & a Number of officers, Genl. Kniphausen Wounded, his Son  
Kill'd, 300 Waggon's with wounded Soldiers went from the Field;  
that the whole City was Alarm'd, Quakers & Tories decamp'd; & that  
Genl Howe had sent a large detachmt. to Chester which must be to  
Secure a Retreat; The Enemy's Loss very great. Our Loss by the best  
Accotts in Kill'd, Wounded & missing does not Exceed 700; I  
momently Expect the particr. from the Genl. As soon as I Receive  
it, it shall be transmitted. I flatter myself I shall soon Send you  
further more Agreeable Accotts. I cannot Add, as I Keep Congress  
waiting & must Attend. I have the Honr. to be, Gentn. in haste,  
Your very hum set.

John Hancock Prest.

RC (M-Ar).

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir

York 8th October 1777.

Two days ago I dispatched a few lines to you by the hand of Sir  
Patrick Houston, probably this which is intended by Muckinfuss may  
reach you first, by him I also send an old packet to Govr. Rutledge  
in which I beleive is one of the 18th September inclosed for you. I  
found it at this place in possession of certain very tardy Travellers. I  
mean now to trouble you with a rather long epistle but from an



assurance of being twenty times at least interrupted in my progress I will not promise regularity. I shall go back to that 18th September & recapitulate as many circumstances in public affairs Since that time as occurs to memory.

The Evening of that day I went as far as Frankfort in order to see into the arrangement of my baggage & to Shift my apparel Suitable to the change of weather & had engaged to breakfast with an old freind at 1/2 past 8 next Morning in Philadelphia. About 4 oClock next Morning I was knocked up by Sir Patrick Houston who informed me that advice had been received of General Howes crossing Schuylkill at 11 oClock & that part of his Army would be in the City before Sunrise. I could feel no impression, I judged differently from the City people who I had always expected would fall a prey to their fears, I considered the difficulty of crossing a ford with an Army of 6 or 7 Thousand Men, Cannon, Horses, Waggon, Catle &c &c, the right disposition of the whole & detaching a respectable force to a distance of 22 Miles. While my Carriage & Waggon were preparing to go forward the Scene was equally droll & melancholy. Thousands of all Sorts in all appearances past by in such haste that very few could be prevailed on to answer to the Simple question what News? I however would not fly, I stayed Breakfast & did not proceed till 8 oClock or past nor would I have gone then but returned once more into the City if I had not been under an engagement to take charge of the Marquis delafayette who lay wounded by a ball through his Leg at Bristol. My bravery however was the effect of assurance for could I have believed the current report, I should have fled as fast as any Man, no Man can possibly have a greater reluctance to an intimacy with Sir William Howe than my Self.

I proceeded to Bristol, the little Town was covered by fugitives, the River by Vessels of War & Store Vessels & others from Philadelphia, the Road choaked by Carriages, Horses & Waggon. The Same was disgustingly Specked by Regimental Coats & Cockades, Volunteer blades I suppose who had blustered in that habit of the mighty feats they would perform if the English should dare to come to Philadelpa. Upon these I looked with deep contempt. From Bristol I had the honour of conducting the Marquis who is possessed of the most excellent funds [of] good sense & inexhaustible patience to Bethlehem where the Second day after our arrival I left him in Bed anxious for nothing but to be again in our Army as he always calls it, & proceeded through Reading to Lancaster, at Reading I learned of General Wayne's false step, a second hindrance to our driving the Invaders out of the Country. That affair & Some others you will find Spoken of in my Sons Letters to me which I shall transmit with this. The moment I had written the preceeding word another Letter from that Gentleman & the most welcome of all I ever received from him was brought into my Chamber. I had before the receipt of this endeavoured to

fortify my mind against the attacks of Ill tidings for as I had heard of death & wounds which had fated other Officers in the Battle of German Town the 3d Inst. & could learn nothing concerning him, it was natural to conclude that an illjudged tenderness had tonguetied all my friends—A Sight of the well known hand on his Letter in a moment dissipated every gloomy apprehension but the Sudden revulsion of joy cost me a few tears which probably would have been so soon started if I had heard of his death. This young Man is a Soldier has done well, the Marquis had informed me on our journey that in the Battle of Brandywine “it was not his fault that he was not killed or wounded, he did every thing that was necessary to procure one or to’ther.”

He has in him qualities more valuable than Courage, he understands the Science of War in theory & is getting fast into practical knowledge, he is modest & cool. I know him well. I speak of him not as my Son, but with pleasure as a freind, a Countryman & a Member of So Carolina. In the former Character I feel a resentment against him although I judged it best to express it in the Softest terms to himself, for the Robberies he has committed, he has taken a husband & Father from his young family, a Guardian from his Brother & Sister, a Son & freind from a dependent Father & I still look upon him as standing on the verge of Eternity. To morrow I may again hear of his bravery sealed by his fall. So let it be! If it be God’s Will tis mine my duty to bear.<sup>1</sup>

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Laurens to Gervais, October 11, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear Son.

York Town 8th October 1777

While I was waiting in humble submission to the Will of the Almighty disposer of all events, having heard of death & Wounds fated to our late freind White & other brave Officers in the battle of German Town, inclined rather to indulge a suspicion that with respect to you an ill judged tenderness had tonguetied all my freinds, your Letter of the 5th came in. The well known inscription instantly dissipated every gloomy Idea, but a sudden revulsion of joy which as instantly followed cost [me a?] Tear & brought such a fit of trembling upon my whole [. . .] probably I should [. . .] <sup>1</sup> much worse news. Accept O God my [humble thanks?].

I congratulate with my Country upon the good conduct & safety of another Citizen who has dared to risque his Life in her Cause—I congratulate with you my Dear Son, with my Daughter, with all our

freinds upon your happy escape. My own duty commands my presence upon this spot, if I were free, I would at all hazards lame & incapable as I am of alert travelling fly to assist as your Nurse until you should be able to take the field again. At this distance I can only help you with prayers & good wishes & thank you for the honour you have done me.

No Man can doubt of your bravery, your own good sense will point out the distinction between [. . .] Courage & temerity nor need I tell you that it [is as?] much your duty to preserve your own health & strength as it is to destroy an Enemy.

Other Accounts do not import our loss to have been, as you intimated, very considerable—& make that of the Enemy about or upwards of 2000, & among these of Killed & wounded many Officers of distinguished rank. Let me know when you are able, the truth as fully & explicitly as you can, adding such remarkable circumstances of the battle as you were witness to—what you learn also of the Enemy's Army, their remaining Numbers & disposition—& what has happened on the River, Forts & Shipping—& You will further oblige Your faithful freind & affectionate Father,

Henry Laurens

[P.S.] My Compliments & Congratulations to your General & in a particular manner to Colonel Pinckney.

RC (ScHi). Addressed: "Colonel John Laurens at General Washington's Head Quarters."

<sup>1</sup> RC damaged; approximately five words missing.

## Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry

My dear Sir,

York 8th Octr. 1777

I must make one general apology for the matter and manner of my letters—the want of time to discharge with propriety, an hundredth part of the business with which I am crowded. My eyes fail me fast, and I believe my understanding must soon follow this incessant toil. We have had another general engagement with the enemy at and near German Town. With ours, we attacked their Army. The plan was well concerted, and the execution was so bravely conducted, that a most brilliant victory was on the moment of being obtained, when accident alone removed it from us. The morning was so foggy, which with the state of the Air keeping down the Smoke of the Cannon & effectually prevented our people from knowing their success, occasioned delay, and gave the enemy time to rally and return to the charge which they did five several times. But this was not the worst. Our right & left Columns mistook each other for enemies and appre-



hending a fresh reenforcement gave way too soon to a last effort of the enemy, and quitted a glorious victory absolutely in their power. However, they retired in order, and had so severely handled the enemy that they dared not pursue, and our wounded with every thing valuable was brought off. Our Army is now upon the ground they left before the battle, in the high spirits, and satisfied they can beat the enemy. I hope they will quickly have an opportunity, as the reinforcements from our Country have reached the Army since the engagement. Our loss is pretty well fixed to 700 killed, wounded and missing. That of the enemy not certainly known, but surely very great, as you may judge by the following intelligence brot this evening by Gen. Greens Aid and which he says may be relied on—Gen. Agnew, Colonels Woolcot, Abercrombie & Tho. Byrd (from Virga) with General De Heisters Son killed, Gen. Kniphausen wounded in the hand, and between 2 and 300 waggons loaded with wounded sent into Philadelphia. That Gen. Howe had sent about 2000 Hessians over Schuylkill (denoting a retreat) and that he refused to let any of the Inhabitants of Philadelphia to go to see the field of battle.<sup>1</sup> Gen Schuyler writes us the 29th [*i.e.* 27th] of September, that if superior numbers, health, and spirits can give success, our army in the Northern department will have it this Campaign. For my part I do not despair of success on this quarter also. Another such battle as the last, will totally unfit Gen Howe for pursuing further hostilities this Campaign and again possess us of Philadelphia.

Suffer me now Sir to recommend to your interest the appointment of the French Artillerists mentioned in our public letter by this express.<sup>2</sup> You may depend upon it that these are Masters of the Art they profess, and are people of character. They are part, and the better part of General Coudrays Corps, who were returning to France upon the death of that General, but prevailed on to remain until our Country could be consulted about employing them. The terms seem high, but the knowledge they possess, and we want, is to us above price. Some Gentlemen from other States have been applying to them, but on inquiry they like the accounts they have received of Virginia better than any other. Now that we have got from under the protection of G. Britain it is indispensably necessary that we understand well the use of Cannon and be strongly provided with them. Capt Loyeaute, whom we propose for Colonel of our Battallion of Artillery is really a man of science, and not unacquainted with practise, and if he can prevail on the Veteran Sergeants to go with him,<sup>3</sup> we shall gain a competency in that art so necessary, and which we are so unacquainted with.

The inclosed is the Substance of the Account brot by Gen. Greens Aid. Be so good as present my respects to Mr Page, and excuse me for not writing to him as I really have not time.

I have a very good opinion of Colo. Carrington and would will-



ingly serve him, but I much doubt whether the rasure of the Journal you propose can be obtained, but I will try.<sup>4</sup>

I am very sincerely and affectionately yours,

Richard Henry Lee

RC (ViStrR).

<sup>1</sup> A similar account of the battle of Germantown is in the Franklin Papers, PPAmP, and is headed "Williamsburg, October 17th, 1777. Extract of a Letter from a Member of Congress dated York Town October the 10th, 1777." It was probably extracted from Lee's October 10 letter to John Page, which although not found was acknowledged by Page in an October 17 letter to Lee thanking him for his letter of the 10th and the account of the Germantown attack. Lee Papers, ViU.

<sup>2</sup> The Virginia delegates' October 10 letter to Governor Henry has not been found, but Anne Philippe Dieudonné de Loyauté's detailed "Propositions" for managing an artillery corps and a copy of the Virginia delegates' proposal to Loyauté which were enclosed in that letter are in the Continental Congress Papers, Vi. The Virginia delegates and Richard Henry Lee in particular continued to urge Henry to secure an appointment for Loyauté as commander of Virginia's artillery regiment, apparently unaware that Washington had already recommended Col. Thomas Marshall for that position. After considerable negotiation Loyauté was commissioned inspector general of Virginia artillery on January 27, 1778, but he resigned the position on May 20, 1778, after the Virginia Assembly ruled that his appointment did not entitle him to a command and he realized he would be merely training Virginia troops. See Lee to Henry, October 28 and November 24, 1777; Virginia Delegates to Henry, November 27, 1777; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:301-3; and *Journals of the Council of the State of Virginia*, ed. H. R. McIlwaine, 3 vols. (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1931-52), 2:76, 135. For Henry's accounts of his efforts in Loyauté's behalf, see his letters to Lee of November 10 and December 18, 1777, and May 28, 1778, in Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:115-16, 133-35, 174.

<sup>3</sup> On October 14 the Virginia delegates wrote to George Pyncheon of Springfield and John Bradford of Boston introducing "the Bearer whom we have employed to prevail, if he can, with eight Sergeants belonging to the late Gen. Coudrays corps of Artillery, to return, and enter into the service of the Commonwealth of Virginia," and requesting Pyncheon and Bradford to assist him in procuring wagons and carriages for the return of the sergeants and their baggage. Lee's copy of this letter is printed under the date "October 16" in Lee, *Letters* (Ballagh), 1:331-32. The success of this mission was reported in Lee's January 7, 1778, letter to Governor Henry from Chantilly, in which he explained that five sergeants and three other officers were on their way to Williamsburg and urged Henry to utilize their knowledge of artillery. Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:140-42.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Carrington had requested that Governor Henry not select officers for the new state artillery corps from the First Continental artillery regiment. Henry had discussed Carrington's behavior, which he considered to be disrespectful of civil authority, in his August 6 letter to the Virginia delegates. The matter was considered in Congress on August 19 and resolutions were adopted which, among other things, required Carrington to apologize to Henry or face dismissal. In his September 12 letter to Lee, Henry acknowledged that Carrington had already made "every concession that was proper" and requested that Congress "erase the Resolution respecting him, that nothing to his prejudice may appear hereafter." On May 23, 1778, Congress confirmed their favorable opinion of Carrington and agreed that the resolution of August 19 should not be published in the printed journals. See JCC, 8:655-56, 11:527-29; and Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:86-88, 94-95.

## James Lovell to William Whipple

My Dear Sir,

York 8th Oct. [1777]

It is impossible for me to write lengthily to you as I am doing all the writing which is to be sent to our Commissioners, Mr Payne not having yet got here. I have not had the pen out of my hands two days. The Boston papers will give you the sum of the accounts of last Saturday's fight. We were near giving a total overthrow to the enemy, and yet we finally have no advantage. I fear we shall not get so good a chance again. Every thing was well planned and no body seems blameable for the failure, Fog and Fortune of War, excepted.

Your affecty,

J.L.

Tr (DLC).

## William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

York Town Octo. 8. 1777, In Congress.

By the inclosed Copy of a Letter just receivd from Genll Washington, You will learn, that there has been another important action between his & the Army of our Enemies, & which has ended not to our advantage, tho it seems to be thot we are not the worse on any Acco save the Loss of Men, which is supposed to be at least ballanced by that of our Enemies. The Prospect was a good while very promising, but it pleased God to blast it by the intervention of a Fog. With what infinite Ease in the random Course of Providence are the grandest Events influenced & determined, a striking Instance of which is this, & so also the very heavy rain which parted the Armys at the moment of Action, abt the 17th ulto. How strange, that so many disbelieve, or at least totally disregard it. We were not prepared for so great a Salvation as seemd to be opening & almost in possession.

We have reason to think that many of our brave Men are fallen, & a number of principal officers killed & wounded, Among the latter Brigr. Gen. Nash of Maryland,<sup>1</sup> a brave officer, mortally. A Gent. in the Action, says it was much warmer than that of Prince Town or Brandywine in both which he was also present. We cannot say much more for want of Information.

The Enemy have got the Delawar Frigate, & the Forts on the River, & probably are in full possession of the River. Tho these things look against Us, We yet hope in the divine Mercy.

I suspect I cannot obtain the Copy in season. The Action was on the 4th near & at German Town, We drove Them a mile or two, with much slaughter, but the Fog was so thick They cod not distinguish each Other, & the Smoke stood over them without Motion & darkend

the Sky &c & threw Them into Confusion, & our troops broke & could not be rallied, retreated with great Regularity, carried off[f] their wounded, baggage, artillery & every thing. They were once in full possession of the Enemy's Camp.

Cant add but that I am, with all possible respect &c, yr obdt & dutifull Servt,  
W Williams

[P.S.] The Express going or gone.

RC (MdBj-G).

<sup>1</sup> That is, North Carolina.

## John Adams to Abigail Adams

My dearest Friend

York Town Octr. 9. 1777

I told you, in a former Letter, that I lodged at Gen. Roberdeau's.

This Gentleman is of French Extraction, his Father was a rich Planter of the Island of St. Christophers, where my Friend was born, and where he has or had an Estate. He has large Property in England, in Virginia, in Philadelphia, in York Town and in various other Parts of Pensilvania. He has also large Property in our American Funds, have put great Sums into the Loan Office.

He was an intimate Friend, and a passionate Admirer of Mr. Whitfield, who always made his House an Home. He has the Reputation, I believe very justly of a pious Man.

His Wife was a Daughter of Mr. Bostwick of New York, a famous Minister, Sister to Mrs. McDougall, the Lady of General McDougal, two as fine Women as ever America produced, excepting one. Mrs. Roberdeau was a beauty. A fine Figure—good Taste—great sense—much Knowledge—a fine Temper. But she is no more.

The Generals two sisters keep his House—the one a Widow, Mrs. Climer, who has a son—the other a Maiden Lady, Miss Elizabeth Roberdeau.

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:352–53.

## Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr.

Dear Father

9th October 1777. York.

The inclosed will give you the latest accounts from our army. I write this to give you some further particulars relating to our northern army. Gates & Arnold are not on speaking terms, the latter asserts that the former behaves to him with Such haughtiness that he can

scarce put up with it, & suspects that Gates is envious of him for the share he had in the late action of the 19th. Burgoyne has strongly intrenched himself in his camp & waits probably for reinforcements from Canada, or for an attack on the high lands by the forces under Clinton at New York. We have reason to believe from a letter we lately recd. from Putnam that Clinton is meditating Such an attack. Putnam is weak but has written for reinforcements which must be drawn from Gate's army, which is said to consist of 13000 men.

Our Assembly will probably meet towards the end of this month or early in the next. I propose to attend the Session, if I am relieved, & I suppose the Assembly will take care to order up some one to keep up the representation.

Col. Lloyd, who was here a day or two informed me of what you mention respecting the negroes going from Poplar Island, but the story was so confused that I hoped it was not true; I expect the particulars of that affair in your next. Notner I suppose will be permitted to return to Annapolis, as the Enemy's fleet I hear has left our Bay.

My love to Molly & Mrs. Darnall & compts to Mr. Pliarne if with you. I am yr. affectionate Son, Ch. Carroll of Carrollton

## ENCLOSURE

8th Oct. 1777

The Enemy in the action of the 4th instant have lossed the following officers: Gen. Agnew killed, Colonels Abercrombe, Bird, Walcot & General de Heister's Son killed, General Kniphausen wounded in the hand. Between 2 & 300 wagons loaded with wounded Soldiers came into the city before Mr. — left it. Several Quakers who were at yearly meeting confirm the above & further say that 2000 Hessians were sent over Schuilkill towards Chester since the action probably to secure a retreat. Our loss about 700 chiefly wounded & taken. Gen. Nash dead of his wound. Doctr. Witherspoon's Son killed. Two aid de camps mortally wounded White & Sherburne of Gen. Sullivane's family. Colonels Hendricks, Stone & lieut. Col. Parker of Virga. wounded included in the above.

N.B. The above account is given by Major Clark, one of General Green's aid de camps. He was not at liberty to mention the person's name from whom he had it but it may be depended on as authentic. Col. Stone is wounded in the ankle; one of the bones broken.

Extract of G. Washington's letter to a member of Congress 5th Oct. 1777 Pennybecker's mill.

A letter which accompanies this to Congress will give an account of an unsuccessful attack upon the Enemy on German Town yesterday about day break. My extream fatigue & hurry & indeed want of



knowledge of the causes which produced some great & capital disappointments do not allow me to be particular at this time.

Since writing the above I have seen General Green, whose column it seems had also drove the enemy & were about closing with us, when unhappily (for I can no otherwise account for it) each took the other for fresh troops of the enemy & retreated precipitately. The fog & clouds of smoke contributed to this as you could scarce distinguish objects at 50 yards. Things appeared in a very favorable way once, as the column under the command of General Sullivan (who behaved extremely well) continued to gain ground upon the Enemy till we drove them from Allen's house to Chew's & on their left much lower thro' the encampment of the light Infantry which was abandoned with their baggage &c. Among other misfortunes that attended us was a hazy atmosphere without a breath of air, so that the smoke of our artillery & small arms often prevented us from Seeing 30 yards & this not for the instant but of long continuance for want of wind to take it off. The causes why the column under Gen. Green & Smallwood did not get up in time I can not now assign, or why Gen. Armstrong, who was to have acted on the Enemy's left, did not push it, I am at present ignorant of. The plan was concerted on very probable grounds of success, & on the execution things looked well a long while as we continued to gain on the Enemy during the whole action, which lasted 2 hours & 40 minutes. My next to Congress will be able to explain matters fully, till then your judgt. must be Suspended. The event turned out contrary to expectation, but we are in no worse condition (except officers & men) than we were.<sup>1</sup>

RC (MdHi). Enclosure: MS (MdHi). In the hand of Carroll.

<sup>1</sup> Although Washington's October 5 letter "to a member of Congress" has not been found, another, nearly identical copy of this extract from it is in the Franklin Papers, PPAmP.

## Committee of Commerce to John Dorsius

[October 9, 1777]

You will observe as a standing Rule that all Millitary Stores are to be delivered to the Order of the Continental Board of War.

All Naval or Marine Stores to the order of the Marine Committee, and All Cloathing of every kind or Articles Suitable therefor to the order of the Cloathier General. Nothing less than an order of Congress, of General Washington, or of the Presidt. and Council of Carolina shou'd ever induce you to depart from this rule.<sup>1</sup>

T1 (DNA: PCC, item 160). "Extract of a Letter from the Commercial Committee to John Dorsius dated York Town in Pennsylvania, Octr. 9th. 1777."

<sup>1</sup>This extract was enclosed in Gen. Robert Howe's November 4 letter to Hancock in which the general explained that he had requested Dorsius, a Continental agent in Charleston, S.C., to send ammunition to Georgia, but that Dorsius had refused because of his interpretation of this committee rule. Howe's request for clarification of authority in such situations was read in Congress on December 29 and referred to the Board of War. PCC, item 160, 1:404-6; and JCC, 9:1064.

## James Duane to Philip Schuyler

My dear General

York Town 9th Octobr. 1777

I am now to thank you for your friendly Letter of the 27th tho' with respect to our military operations in the North; on which every thing near and dear to me and mine more immediately depends, your Intelligence is very far from answering the sanguine Expectations which it seems have been too fondly entertain'd. Every Eye has been long eagerly turn'd towards Albany for an Express which was to bring the news of the Disappointment and overthrow of General Burgoine —An Event which with the Blessing of Heaven woud draw the most extensive good Consequences (probably it wou'd put it in General Washington's power to terminate the war by Land by a decisive Blow in this Quarter for at present General Howe is not very formidable tho' he has been most fortunate). I need enter into no Comments on any of the Circumstances you relate; I sincerely lament them, I hope all gracious Providence will still direct and conclude Every thing for our Peace & Security.

General Washington on Saturday last bravely attacked General Howe's Army at German Town. Such was the wisdom of the Disposition, & the Ardour of the Troops, that the Enemy cou'd make little Resistance and were actually routed in every Quarter. While Victory seemd ready to be decided in our favour the heavy fog which prevailed deceivd our Right Wing into an Apprehension that the left Wing (which according to the order of Battle was, after dispersing a Body of the Enemy, to Join them, and was accordingly coming up) consisted of a fresh Reinforcement of British Troops. Unhappily the same Opinion was entertain'd of the left wing by the Right: And this mutual Error brought on a precipitate Retreat of both which soon became general. Another incident was very unfortunate. Some British Troops on their flight took possess. of Mr. Chew's large stone House which you may have seen at German Town & mounted a piece of Cannon in the Entry; with which & their small Arms they put a stop to the pursuite of part of our Army after their routed Enemy. To this House the Party occupying it drew Reinforcements which gave their Friends time to Rally, & this probably greatly contributed to turn the Fortune of the day. In the Conclusion our army retreated by a Quick

pace; but not being followd they got into order and carried off their wounded & Cannon. Our Loss is estimated at 700 Killed, wounded & missing: among the first Brigadeer General Nash of North Carolina, by a Common tale a most promising officer! The Enemy's Loss is not ascertain'd; but a Gent. out of Philadelphia affirms the Carnage among them has been dreadful! That 300 Waggon Loads of wounded were carried into the City after the battle. That the dead are so numerous that Genl. Howe would not refer the Inhabitants to see the field of battle; excusing himself that it was a Sight which wou'd shock Humanity. General Agnew, Several Colonels & officers of Rank are also said to be among the Slain. The American Troops pleas'd that they have made the British Grenadiers & Light Infantry run in their Turn, are in high spirits. Indeed all Accounts agree that the attack was made with great Vigour, & pushed with perseverance. General Howe, it is said, has highly commended General Washington for his Intelligence, & his plan of Attack, & the Americans for their Gallantry on this Occasion. It is confidently asserted that he was on the point of withdrawing his flying Troops into Chester at the moment our Army retreated: And that there was the utmost Consternation in Philadelphia; where the American Army was expected and from which the Tories were precipitately retreating. In short if we may believe Reports, nothing further was necessary to accomplish Victory than to have known our own situation and that of the Enemy's; but this the fog prevented. Your Letter, my dear Sir, is referred to a Committee. They will be in no hurry to make out your Charge: and I think the Line you have drawn for your Attendance is Justifiable and proper. I shall however press to bring your affair to a Hearing when Circumstances will admit.<sup>1</sup> General Washington most certainly has no leisure at present. This last affair has rais'd his Reputation very much indeed; & I think very deservedly.

Be pleas'd to Return any respectful Compts. to Mrs. Schuyler and the young Ladies; & believe me most respectfully, Dear Sir, Your most Obedt. humb. Sert.

Jas. Duane

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> See John Hancock to Philip Schuyler, October 12, 1777.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir,

York Town: Pennsylvania, October 9th. 1777

It is with the highest Pleasure I comply with the Order of Congress in conveying to you the enclosed Resolve expressing the Thanks of that Body to you for the wise and well concerted Attack upon the Enemy near Germantown on the 4th Inst. and also to the Officers and

Soldiers for their brave Exertions on that Occasion: And I must request you will communicate to them this distinguished Mark of the Approbation of their Country.<sup>1</sup>

It is indeed true "that the best Designs and boldest Efforts may sometimes fail of Success thro' unforeseen Incidents," yet is it a Source of Satisfaction to reflect in such Instances, that every Thing has been done to insure Success that Human Wisdom could devise. Something must still be left to Fortune. It is not in Mortals to *command* Success. But permit me to say, Sir, you have done more on this Occasion—you have *deserved* it.

Wishing with the utmost Sincerity that your great and virtuous Exertions in the Cause of Freedom & your Country may be crowned with Victory, I have the Honour to be, with perfect Esteem & Respect, Sir, your most obed & very hble Servt.

John Hancock Presidt

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:785.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir, York Town: Pennsylvania, October 9th. 1777

The absolute Necessity of cutting off all Supplies and Intelligence from the Enemy in and near the City of Philada. and thereby preventing any Intercourse between them and the disaffected in the State of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, has induced the Congress to adopt the inclosed Resolves, in Hopes, if possible to put an effectual Stop to a Practice so extremely dangerous to the Cause of America. They have, for this End, authorized you to sentence by Court Martial any Person convicted of either of the above mentioned Offences, or of acting as a guide or Pilot, to suffer Death or such other Punishment as may be thought adequate, provided he is taken within thirty Miles of any Town in Pennsylvania, Jersey or Delaware that is in Possession of the Enemy. They have also recommended to the good People of this & the other States, to be vigilant in apprehending and securing all such Persons as may be caught in the Violation of the enclosed Resolves, to which I beg Leave to refer your Attention.<sup>1</sup>

Your Favour of the 5th Inst was duely received and immediately laid before Congress. I have the Honour to be, with the greatest Respect, Sir, your most obedt. & very hble Servt.

John Hancock Presidt

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:783–85.



## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir

York 9th October 1777

This will probably be delivered to you by the Baron Kalb a Gentleman who has been long attending Congress with tenders of his Service in the Army & who was a few days before we left Philadelphia actually voted a Major General to be Commissioned one day antecedant to the Marquis delafayette.<sup>1</sup> This shows you the high estimation which Congress had made of the abilities & merits of the Baron, nevertheless from certain delicacies respecting rank on his part & other circumstances which are unnecessary to recapitulate the business which Congress had so much at heart became Stagnant & the Baron I believe is determined to return to France by way of Charles Town. At his arrival there I intreat you to wait on him & do for him every kind office which he will permit to make his residence easy & to facilitate his embarkation. I should have thought it a fortunate event if a Gentleman of Baron Kalbs knowledge in the Science of War could have been return'd even for our Southern department. Our Generals are good so far as their experience extends, but the deficiency in that grand requisite has cost America some thousands of Lives & will probably protract a bloody War which might have been [decided?] a Month ago. Tis clear from our present comparative Situation on this day that we had & Still have Men & Men of bravery enough for the purpose.

I shall write to you by Mukinfuss who will go to morrow & probably be with you before this. By him I will endeavor to send a Letter for England &c.

LB (SchH).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens neglected to mention that on October 4 Congress had decided that de Kalb and Lafayette should hold commissions as major general bearing the same date. See *JCC*, 9:769; and Laurens to John Rutledge, September 16, 1777, note 4.

## Samuel Chase to Thomas Johnson

My Dear Sir      York Town. October 10th. 1777, Fryday Evening

I wrote to You this Morning the best Accounts I could obtain of the Battle of the 4th Inst.<sup>1</sup> I sent My Letter by Major Tarling Deputy Quarter Master of Georgia. This afternoon I was honoured with your favor of the 8th Ulto. inclosing the Petition of Brothers & Doffler, & inclosed is the Determination of Congress.<sup>2</sup> My motion being granted a similar one was prayed by Dr. Wetherspoone for some Damage done by Colonel Stone's Regiment. This produced an universal Complaint against our Troops. It is referred to the Board of War to consider of some general Regulation.

I have just seen Capt. Cox, who acted as Brigade Major to Colo.



For this purpose I beg to refer you to the enclosed Copy of a Letter from a Gentleman of distinction who was an Eye witness to the Proceedings of that day. All Accounts agree the Fog alone which prevented our Army from knowing the Flight and consternation of the Enemy deprived us of a Compleat Victory. General Washington since the Battle has been Joined by General Varnums Brigade consisting of 1200 Rank & file Continentals, & at least an equal Number of militia: so that you may expect soon to hear of another Attack: for he is stronger now than in the last Engagement.

It is strongly reported that the Delaware frigate which was either given up by Treachery (surrendered, or lost by an Accident of fire as some say) is retaken. It will, if true, be of more Importance than you may at first imagine as the preservation of the water Defences of the River Delaware greatly depend upon retaking this ship out of the hands of the Enemy.

I have nothing to add, but that I am, most respectfully, Sir, your Excellency's most Obedient & very huml Servt. Jas Duane

RC (N). *Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 2:488-89. RC damaged; missing words supplied from Tr.

<sup>1</sup> Duane may have drafted this letter on October 9 since in the first sentence he seems to be referring to his October 8 letter to Governor Clinton.

## James Duane to Mary Duane

York Town 10th October 1777

I have the great pleasure, my dearest Polly, of your favour of the 8th of September, which was not less than a month on the way. But the Satisfaction, which I long wished, it communicated by assuring me that yourself, my Children and our Friends in general enjoyed the Blessing of Health, and by the divine goodness had a fair Prospect of Security against the cruel Designs of our inveterate Enemies. I hope very soon to be informed of a happy Conclusion of the northern Campaign, and that it will be in my power to spend the winter with you between the Manour and Duanesburgh. I have with this View applied to Gouverneur Clinton for leave to return being sufficiently tired of Absence and publick Business.

Last Saturday another Battle was fought between the American and British armies at German Town about Six miles from Philadelphia. Such was the wisdom of General Washington's disposition, and the Ardour of the Troops that the Enemy gave way in every Quarter, their Grenadeers and Light Infantry flying with the utmost Precipitation and carrying along with them the Battalions which were to have supported them. All was Terror and dismay, & General Howe had already concluded to withdraw his routed Army into Chester and



evacuate Philadelphia, where already the Inhabitants rended the Air with loud Huzzas for Washington. But see, my dearest Polly, the uncertainty of Human expectations, and more especially of the Events of War. The morning was extremely foggy, our Army were ignorant of the Extent of their advantages, for the several wings could keep up no Communication. The General had directed the two Divisions after they had dispersed the Bodies of the Enemy against whom they were respectively destined, *to unite*: But having succeeded the Left wing was accordingly Approaching toward the Right, but by a fatal misapprehension they took each other for strong and fresh Reinforcements of the Enemy; and immediately, to the utter Astonishment of the British Troops, retreated, and, chiefly from this unhappy Error, gave up the Victory which in effect they had been crown'd with unknown to themselves. Thus, at least, is the matter represented. General Washington brought off his wounded & Cannon, his Loss in killed, wounded and missing being not more than seven hundred. Among the first is Brig. General Nash of North Carolina, an officer of great merit! General Howe has also lost several officers of distinction it is said, vizt. General's Agnew, Grant and Erskine,<sup>1</sup> two Colonels, & many other officers; between two and three hundred Waggon Loads of wounded it is said were carried into Philad. The number of the dead is also said to be very considerable and this is very probably the Case, as the Battle was long and attended with a pursuit for several Hours. General Washington since this Battle has been reinforced with 1200 Continental Troops & at least as many militia.

Be pleased to present my dutiful Regards to our dear & hnd Father, Mamma, and every branch of the Family; and my Blessing to our dear Children, and believe me to be, with inviolable Fidelity, my dearest Polly, Your ever affectionate Husband, Jas Duane

P.S. The particulars you mention of our dear Sally give me great Pleasure.

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> Of Howe's generals, only James Agnew was killed at the battle of Germantown.

## William Duer to George Clinton

Dear sir,

Octr. 10th. 1777.

I should have wrote to you long before this Time had I not been prevented by a lingering Sickness, which has not permitted me to attend so closely to the public Business as my Inclination would induce me, much less to attend to a Correspondence with my Freinds. I hope this will be received in Excuse for my Inattention to your kind Remembrance.



Among a number of Persons who accompanied Monsr. du Coudray from France (a Gentleman, to whom this Continent is in a great degree indebted for the very large Supplies of Artillery and Military Stores which have arrived in it) is a Person perfectly well acquainted with the Process of extracting and refining Salt Petre, making Powder, constructing Powder Mills on the best Principles, and in short with every thing which relates to the Manufactory of Powder.<sup>1</sup> Since Mr. Coudray has been unfortunately drown'd, this Person with several other valuable Officers and Artificers who came with him propose returning to France, unless Proposals should be made to them in order to induce them to stay in America. Mr. Duane and myself are extremely anxious that this Powder Maker, in particular, and two or three other Valuable officers should be retain'd for the service of our State: and we therefore wish that the Legislature would be pleas'd to vest us with discretionary Powers to offer such Terms to them as we shall think adequate to their particular Merits. You may depend on it that we will not abuse a trust, which we only wish to exercise for the Interest of our State. We have ample Testimonials that this Powder Maker is without Exception the first Artist in France, and had he not been Smuggled out under the Character of an Officer of Bombadiers, great Opposition would have been made to his coming over.

I beg a speedy Answer on this Subject. I am, dear Sir, very Sincerely, Your Obedt. Hble Servt. Wm. Duer.

[P.S.] I must refer you to Mr. Duane for Intelligence.

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> Duer is referring to Nicholas Fouquet, who with his son Mark was employed by the Board of War in 1778 to serve as a powder maker and inspector of powder magazines. See *JCC*, 9:877, 10:57, 109, 122; and André Lasseray, *Les Français sous les treize étoiles, 1775-1783*, 2 vols. (Macon and Paris: Imprimerie Protat Frères, 1935), 1:82, 218-19.

## Elbridge Gerry and John Penn to Elias Boudinot

Dr. Sir

York Town Octr 10th 1777

Mr. Wilson a British officer of the 55th Regiment, being destitute of such Articles as are essentially necessary for his Convenience whilst a prisoner, is desirous of being exchanged, or, if this cannot be procured, of being permitted to go into New York on Parole, to furnish himself with Necessaries as aforesd. General Mifflin has strongly recommended him, as a Gentleman whose good Conduct intitles him to particular Notice. I should with pleasure have moved for an Order

of Congress to this purpose, had it not been irregular, & therefore important; & shall be glad that the Request of Mr. Wilson may be complied with, as far as it shall consist with the good of Service.

Mr. Allen McDonald is also mentioned by the General as having behaved with much Decency, & "being in a Decay"; if his Exchange can be procured without Injury to the Cause, I wish it may be accomplished, being Sir with much Esteem yours sincerely,

E. Gerry

[P.S.] I also shall be glad if Mr. Wilsons wishes might be complied with.

J. Penn

RC (DLC). Written and signed by Gerry, with a postscript and signature by Penn.

## Cornelius Harnett to Richard Caswell

Sir, York Town Pennsylvania Oct. 10th. 1777<sup>1</sup>

I had the honor of receiving your favour of the second of September,<sup>2</sup> two days ago, and I am surprised you have not received four other of my letters since the 11th of August. I fear there is little dependence on our Post office for the safe conveyance of Intelligence. Since mine, soon after the Battle of the Brandywine nothing happened material in the movements of Genl Washington's Army, until the 4th Instant when he attacked the Enemy early in the morning. The particulars you have enclosed in an abstract from the General's letter to Congress. Poor General Nash is since dead of his wound, his thigh being shattered by a Cannon Ball. We lost several other brave officers and many wounded, the latter were all brought off the field. The Enemy as appears from a deserter had Genl Agnew, Col Bird & Col Walcot killed, with several other officers. Also Genl Sir William Erskine wounded in the head & ancle, it is said mortally. The whole loss of the Enemy by several accounts amount to about 800 killed and wounded.

I forwarded your letter to Capt Caswell by express. Our President enclosed it in his letter to the General. I have not the least doubt of his having come off unhurt. God send it may be so.

It gives me pleasure to hear Col Shephards Battalion is in such forwardness, and hope they may arrive here in time to be serviceable. Our affairs to the Northward wear a very promising aspect, since the late drawn Battle in that quarter, of which some time ago I gave you information. It is firmly believed Genl Burgouyn must meet with inevitable ruin. It is imagined Genl Washington intends very soon another attack on the Enemy's army. He has since that of the 4th Instant been reinforced by a large body from Virginia and Peeks

Kiln. I am rejoiced to hear the Tories have been prevented from carrying their infernal plan to execution. I hope decisive measures will be adopted to bring the Ringleaders to punishment.<sup>3</sup>

Congress have once more began to think of confederation, I could wish to know the sentiments of our General Assembly upon some Capital points. The method of voting by States was yesterday determined viz. that each State should have one vote, no Colony against it but Virginia.<sup>4</sup> The grand point of settling the Quota of Taxes each State is to pay, comes on this afternoon. Three proposals have been made, one to tax by the Poll, another to assess the value of the Lands, and the other to assess property in general.<sup>5</sup> The latter at present I think most equitable, should the confederation be agreed upon Mr Penn and myself will embrace the earliest opportunity of transmitting it to your Excellency, to be laid before the General Assembly. The Delegates of the several States are exceedingly anxious to finish this business, many assert that the very salvation of these States depend upon it; and that none of the European powers will publicly acknowledge them free and independent, until they are confederated. The time of Congress ever since my Arrival has been chiefly taken up with Army matters.

We have as yet no printing press, or Post Office established here. This will be done in a few days. I shall then have it more in my power to communicate to your Excellency every piece of interesting intelligence which comes to hand. At present I can hardly find time to write a letter, Congress sits from morning 'till night, and Committees 'till 10 & 11 O'clock. In fact I am almost tired of my troublesome office, and heartily wish to be with my family. I have not time to enlarge, but have the honor to be with respect, Your Excellency's most Obedt & very huml Servant,

Cornl Harnett

[P.S.] I beg your Excellency will remember me most respectfully to your Council.

Tr (Nc-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> Internal evidence suggests that Harnett may have drafted this letter as early as October 8. Congress settled the question of voting by states on October 7—an issue Harnett says “was yesterday determined.” And he states that the issue of state tax quotas “comes on this afternoon,” yet Congress postponed consideration of this matter on October 8 and then took it up on the 9th.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is in *N.C. State Records*, 11:602-4.

<sup>3</sup> The government of North Carolina had recently suppressed a “conspiracy” consisting mostly of Anglican loyalists who were embittered by the disestablishment of the Church of England in the state. See Jeffrey J. Crow, “Tory Plots and Anglican Loyalty: The Llewelyn Conspiracy of 1777,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 55 (January 1978): 1-17.

<sup>4</sup> See *JCC*, 9:779-83.

<sup>5</sup> See *JCC*, 9:785, 788-89, 797-98, 800-802.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Town Pensylvania Ocr. 10. 1777

This makes the 11th Letter I have wrote you since I left home some on business & others with News. I have three days ago, recd your favours of the 4 & 11th ulto. Poor Coll Kennons family, I feal for them most Sincerely. It gives me pleasure to hear you have disposed of half the Concern to Gentlemen high, *very high* in my esteem, but you sold too Cheap, such a Still as the large one, Could not have been purchased in Philadelphia when I left it under £1500 this Currency. I am glad you have some Mallosses to make a beginning with, your 5,000 gallons distilled mild rum would fetch 60/ per Gallon in this State & several others, it is amazing to see the Advanced Prices on every thing in this Country.

I shall enquire as to a Distiller, but you may be Assured you may purchase Negroes or any other Article of Commerce 150 per Cent Cheaper in No. Carolina than you could in Philadelphia before Congress left it. 500 Dollars for a small Mulatto boy has been lately given. As to Labourers, you may surely get them either on purchase or hire 100 per Cent Cheaper than I can possibly procure them here. The Distiller I shall attend to & procure one if possible. I shall be very happy if Mr Brice will undertake the Transacting the whole business of the Compy. I am [. . .] surprised Mr. Banning should bring in any other Charge for repairs. I can only say I will not allow one farthing more than I did at the last Settlement, he told me of a Small matter which he said would be about 30/ or 40/. I agreed to pay that, but I cannot Consent to the doubling the sum.

I refer you to the Bearer Coll Walton for News as he has every necessary information with him. He is a Georgia Delegate returning home. I beg you will be Civil to him & Introduce him to all our friends. *He is a worthy Man.*

Mr. Quince & Mr. Ancrum never write to me, I have Malice at heart against them both. I shall write Mr. Brice fully in Answer to his Letters as soon as I can have it in my power to give him Satisfactory Information. Tell Him this. I have it not in my power to Correspond with Cap Forsters brother or any Other Gentn in the Lower Counties. I would advise my friend Brice to go on with his Administration, in fact the people in that State are two thirds I may say 7/8 Tories, I hope Mr. Forster is not one of them.

Genl. Washingtons Army marched towards the Great City the 8 Instant & I suppose intends to have another brush with the Enemy. God send him Success. Our Northern Affairs seem to be in a good train. Genl. Burgoyne is in a very Critical Scituation, good news is hourly Expected from that Quarter.

Coll Walton is just setting off. Dr Sir, Your sincr. friend &c &c,

Cornl Harnett



## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear Son,

York Town 10th October 1777.

Your favour of the 7th reached me yesterday Morning at the opening of Congress & as it contained some things new it afforded satisfaction to more than one. A witty Gentleman from a southern Latitude doubted its having been writ with your left hand & undertook to prove it was dextrously executed. Take care of yourself, I mean a little more care of your self, nay, if you won't do so to oblige me, do it that you may be the sooner & more able to gratify your [ruling] passion.

I have had the perusal of a very serious Letter from your General to a worthy freind in Congress, the Contents affected me exceedingly, I don't recollect a Man in my long & numerous acquaintance in the World nor my little reading whose circumstances were equally pitiable or whose merit in persevering & struggling against such difficulties is more admirable. We yesterday received a long Chatechistical Letter from General Sullivan the sequel of which is a desire to withdraw himself from the troops which gave me an opportunity of turning to a Gentleman, "did not I tell you this would be the effect of stigmatizing an Officer upon the vague opinion & report of a Member of Congress." What do you think 'though a very sensible Man was his answer? Why did they then use my friend Schuyler so? The Cases are by no means parrallel but admit they are, would you complete the ruin of the 13 United States because a Man in a party opposite to yours has done them an injury.<sup>1</sup>

It greives me to see an Assembly which you may remember I was wont to celebrate as the most august in the Universe, so frequently receive reprimands & more to know they deserve them, I can't suppose you have any influence with General Sullivan, otherwise I would intreat you to stretch it if necessary to prevail with him to retract his seeming determination. 'Tis not a bad maxim which my worthy old freind in Charles Town has often inculcated upon my mind, "we should always take things from whence they come." Applying this to the whole Body would rather aggravate the offence—but bodies are sometimes infirm & I say with very deep concern I never heretofore have been ashamed of being a Member—and truly if I did not think I saw a prospect of at least reducing the pernicious monster party, I would rely upon the Candor of my Countrymen & return to her without waiting permission. Upon second thoughts, this would not be wise.

We are now upon the Confederation, have surmounted one vast point—the Votes are to be by States & not by Voices.<sup>2</sup> The present question is the mode of Taxation. Two days have been amused in conning it, some sensible things have been said, & as much nonsense as ever I heard in so short a space, I have not contributed to either.

I mean to expose my inabilities this Morning in a very few words because I think very few are necessary & very few would be made if we were about to Tax one State in which all were equally Interested. Candour & genuine honesty ought then to be our guides.<sup>3</sup> I wish it had been convenient for you & I to have sat an hour or two upon that paper. I should have consulted, I now inform you as one of my Constituents.

Tell me is it so that my old friend Grant is dead? A Letter from a Miss Lucy Leonard to General Mifflin asserts it. I also am told that Kniphausen & Sr. W. Erskine are on the same list. Poor Grant, I feel for him, this sort of Enmity cannot totally eradicate an old friendship.

I beg my Compliments to Your General & Colonel Pinckney & receive the present offering [. . .] as a little Morning Chat which friends will [adjudge?] it is often as insipid as this. If poor White is still among the Living I will indulge hopes of his getting forward. Tell him that his Wife nor his Brother does not more sincerely pray for it than I do.

Adieu,

Henry Laurens

[P.S.] Beg my Complims. to Colo Hartly & tell him every body here very well, that the Kindness [. . .] in his House makes York less disagreeable to me than it seems to be to all my Brethren.

RC (MHi: William Gilmore Simms Collection deposit, 1973).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. John Sullivan's September 27 letter to President Hancock, which was read in Congress this day, is in PCC, item 160, fols. 57-62, and Sullivan, *Letters* (Hammond), 1:460-70. Sullivan was irked by congressional dissatisfaction with his generalship during an August 22 raid on Staten Island and the September 11 battle of Brandywine. See John Hancock to Washington, September 3, note 2, and September 14 (2d letter), 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Congress had decided this issue on October 7. *JCC*, 9:779-82.

<sup>3</sup> On October 13 Congress decided to use the value of lands and the improvements made thereon to ascertain each state's share of "the proportion of the public expence incurred by the United States for their common defence and general welfare." *JCC*, 9:785, 788-89, 793, 797-98, 800-802. For an incisive analysis of the controversy in Congress over the basis of taxation under the Articles of Confederation, see Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation: An Interpretation of the Social-Constitutional History of the American Revolution, 1774-1781* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1940), pp. 145-50.

## John Penn to Richard Caswell

Sir

Pennsylva. York Town Octor. 10th. 1777

On the 4th Instant about Six in the morning Genl Washington Attacked Genl. Howe's Army in different places. The enemy were surprized and drove everywhere for three Hours. Our Troops behaved with great Courage and to the Honor tho they passed through

the Enemys Camp where their Tents were full of Cloths and other Things yet none stoped to Plunder. Genl. Howe was so alarmed that it is said Chester was pitched upon as the place for his army to retreat to but unfortunately at that instant two of our Collums mistook each other for enemies & both return in such haste that there was no such thing as rallying the Men. This was owing to a very great Fogg that lasted until after the Battle which Continued untill nine oclock, besides there was no Air to carry off the Smoke of the Guns so that a man could not see 50 yards.

The Enemy were astonished at our retreat as they looked upon everything as lost with them, they give General Washington great Credit for the manner of his Attack as they often tried but never could once Flank us, we brought away all our Cannon & nearly all of our wounded. Poor General Nash was Killed by a Cannonball with his Horse, his Brigade was to Act as a Corps-de-Reserve, I believe very few of Our Troops were engaged from what I hear and that Our worthy Genl. was Killed at a Great Distance by meer Accident, he was highly esteemed in the Army. It is said Col. Buncombe & Col. Erwin were take prisoners by being lame tho not wounded. *Your Son* I am Told is very well, indeed the above are all I can hear of that belonged to No. Carolina that Suffered. We had no return yet of our killed & wounded, it is supposed to consist of about 700. The accounts given by different Persons make the Enemy's loss to be very considerable, they say that near 300 Waggon Loads of their wounded were sent to the Barracks in Philada, and that Genl. How refused to let the Citizens walk on the Field before the dead were taken care of. Genl. Agnew is dead, Sir William Erskin Wounded in the head supposed to be since dead & a very large number of others Killed & wounded. As soon as we get a return I will transmit them to Carolina. Genl. Washington has had a Considerable reinforcement from Virga. & elsewhere since the Battle. I hope he will give How another Stroke before we loose possession of the River Delaware, which would ruin him. Our men are in high Spirits on finding they can make the Enemy's best Troops run by Attacking them with Courage & are Sencible now if they had rallied or not have been Surprized in the manner above mentioned that Genl. How and his whole Army would have been ruined. Our Affairs to the Northward are in a Good way. I hope soon to have it in my power to write you that Burgoyne & his Troops are in Our Hands. Inclosed is a letter from Buchanan Commissary Genl. relative to the Pork you mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

Please to inform Mr Nash that I will endeavour to have proper care taken of the Genls. effects for the benefit of his Family. I wrote in a very great hurry to him two days ago<sup>2</sup> requesting he would shew you the Letter, must now request your Excellency would communicate this to Mr. Nash. I am with due respect, sir, Your Obt. Servt.

J Penn



[P.S.] Since writing this letter I am told that Genl. Washington is Marching towards Philada. to give Genl. Howe another attack. His men are in high Spirits, we are still in possession of the River. Miss Lucy Leonard a Young Lady lately out of the City says the British Officers have long Faces & declare that they have not such a Drubbing since Bunker Hill, that *the* City Appears to be in Mourning, the Cry of the Tories was that they must leave the Town with Genl. Howe, that all the Hospitals with several empty Houses could not Contain their wounded, that Genls. Agnew, Grant, Kniphausen & Sir William Erskin had died of their Wounds. Your Son is well. I am told that Genl. Nash was wounded in the beginning a great way off by Accident as he could not be seen. A Gentn. informs me he was so ill as to make any assistance unnecessary & that he left him on Monday at the Last Gasp.

I am, Yours &c,

J P

RC (PU).

<sup>1</sup> A letter from William Buchanan to Caswell on this subject, dated October 17, 1777, is in *N.C. State Records*, 11:656. If this was the letter Penn enclosed, it was obviously misdated when printed.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Dear Sir,

York Town Octr. 10th. 1777

I am honored with your favor of this date, and with concern I find the alarm taken by the State, at the hint thrown out respecting the calling of a Convention in a few hasty lines the production of a very few minutes while the Express waited. As my time is too much engross'd to take Copies of my Letters I cannot recur to what I wrote, but I meant only to convey this Idea that some real Friends of our State Members of Congress were of Opinion that the Salvation of the State depended on calling of a Convention, which was construed by Council and Assembly as appears from a Letter I am honoured with from the Speaker, confirmed by the Attorney General, into a serious Intention in Congress of interfering in the internal Police of our State so far at least as to influence into the measures in Question, whereas it arose in a *tete a tete* betwixt some, as I have already said, real Friends and myself, nor will you be surprised with the sentiment when you are acquainted with the motives. It was publicly and confidently said in and out of Congress that a Quorum of the Legislature could not be got together.<sup>1</sup> And as the necessity of the Times required the most vigorous measures, and the season for taking the sense of the people for or against a Convention was at hand, their voice in Convention to lay down a system to be executed by Committees of that Body, dispersed thro' the State was thought



the best succedaneum for the want of an established Legislature, and such Laws compitent to the emergency of the times, which were not provided. That these Exertions were necessary to the Situation of the State, and it's safety and liberty would be provided for better than by the interference of Congress, until such Convention had appointed a Legislative Body. This was thought the best Expedient, for these Reasons, and might prove a healing measure to our unhappy Divisions. A mistake of the day of Election and that the Constitution had appointed the first Tuesday of this present month, which I could not contradict (as in the hurry of removing, my Copy containing the Constitution was mislaid) influenced to the hint offered you as above, for in this place there was not the least appearance of an Election, from whence it was judged that the people were in such a maze that the day of Election had throughout the State elapsed [. . .] (nor could I satisfy Enquirers on this head) or at best that a partial Election would obtain and our Country continue to suffer through want of exertion. Thus was I distracted until Dr. Ewing informed me that the Assembly and Council were preparing the most salutary Laws,<sup>2</sup> of which I am more fully convinced by the specimen of one put into my hands by Mr. Sergeant, which rejoiced my heart, and is a full proof that under my apprehensions there was no other way of supplying the very powers given but by a Convention. I heartily congratulate you on the concurring Providences which enliven the prospect of publick Affairs. I am very respectfully, Dr Sir, Yr. most obt. and very huml. Serv,

Daniel Roberdeau

RC (McHi).

<sup>1</sup> The Pennsylvania Assembly, which had adjourned from Philadelphia on September 18, was scheduled to reconvene in Lancaster on September 25, but not until October 6 did it finally secure a quorum. After a brief flurry of legislative activity it adjourned on October 13 with the intention of reconvening on the 27th, but in fact was unable to attain a quorum until November 20, 1777. Minutes of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania, DLC(ESR).

<sup>2</sup> For one of the "salutary Laws" that the assembly had in preparation at this very time—providing for the creation of a council of safety to cope with the crisis resulting from the recent penetration of the state by British troops—see Roberdeau to Wharton, October 14, 1777, note 1.

## Eliphalet Dyer to John Sullivan

Sir

York town Octobr 11th 1777

I had the pleasure of hearing your letter read in Congress yesterday. I was pleased with your manly Justification and Appeal but as I had often rise in Congress for your Vindication against the Unjust & Malign Calumny of your Enemies (which every good, brave, spirited & Virtuous man will have) I could not bare after you had often braved & defyed every danger from the Enemies of your Country,

You should prove a Coward when Attacked by your personal ones of your own Country, Sink under Unjust reproach, and Submit to the servile humiliating Terms of your Cruel foes, who have Attacked you with the poisonous darts of Calumny in order to effect the Very purpose of your quitting the Army which in the Close of your letter you tamely Yield to them.

Sir, you that have braved every danger for the sake of your Country: are you afraid of the reproach of your dastardly foes who by & by if you boldly attack them & maintain your ground which you are well able to do must servilely hide themselves behind the Curtain & sink under your Superior Merit. Sir you are not alone, you have friends enough in Congress & among your Countrymen who dare, & will Support you Against all their Malice & Envy which has allready recoild in a great measure on their own heads & must soon Terminate I dare say in their own Confusion. If you will only maintain your ground & boldly disdain to leave the field to the Triumph of your Enemies, all their Attacks will only tend to Illustrate your Carracter And make your Virtues displayed in the Cause of your Country more & more Conspicuous. If I had time & it was proper in the way of a letter I could give you a Satisfactory Account how your Enemies prevailed to Induce Congress to come into those hasty resolves which touch you so sensibly. I know you must feel them & you ought to, some of your friends I think Yeilded too much & believe they thot for the publick good. Sch——ler & St. C——r were Continually brot on the Stage, and no one but a N E——d man could satisfye their resentments, & to have taken one of a low Carracter would not Answer their purpose. Therefore as they were to be brot to a Court of Enquiry so must you, as they must be recalled till an Enquiry could be had, so must you, or our Conduct must be deemed partial. This had an unhappy effect on some unwary & incautious, the bate took, it Catchd in an unlucky hour, or I may say moment, & was as soon repented of by some. They were brot to their senses before the Genlls letters come but that put it in their power to reverse the sudden decree. A Court of Enquiry I dare say will Terminate much more to your honor than if your friends could have avoided it. But Sir never Yield to the Enemies of your Country nor to the Malignity of your personal foes till Providence, which I trust if you Continue & persevere in Virtue & the glorious cause in which your Engaged will give you a Compleat Victory over both—or if you must dye boldly die a Martyr & not with the reproach of a suicide.

Am as ever have been your sincere friend and with much Esteem,  
Yr Very Hble Servt, Elipht Dyer

[P.S.] They begin to repent. Persevere.

A short line from you would be very acceptable & gratefully receivd. E D

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

11th October [1777]

I have Sent in the packet with this heapes of Papers containing a great deal which may be new. You will be so good to communicate any thing I mean every part if he desires it to the president, to Mr. Manigault & to Mr. Wells such parts as may be valuable to him but the Letter from a great General is not for the public Eye. Do take care of my freind John Laurens' Letter, I have no objection to this being read by my freinds. My respectful Compliments Mr. Lowndes.

You need not be told that I am in haste—you see it—but there is no avoiding it in this times.

This moment Interesting Intelligence from Peeks Kill which I have Sent to the President.<sup>1</sup> I cannot Say a word about my own affairs—& I trust I need not—tomorrow your Letters shall undergo a Serious review & be answered next Week.

Mukinfuss wants Money. I have Supported him with Sixty Dollars & taken his Bill on Mr. Dorsius & will here inclose it, receive the amount & post to my Credit.

My best Compliments & good wishes to Mrs. Gervais, to the Children, to each & every one of my freinds & those who ask after me, particularly to General Howe & let him know any thing Interesting or worth his attention in my papers but if Congress affairs caution is necessary. I will write to the General & to W. Brisbane & other freinds next Week.

A Gentleman from Camp informs me J. L. is now by the General appointed Aid de Camp with rank of Lieut Colonel.<sup>2</sup> He was before only a volunteer & nominal &ca.

I would continue Lewis Roux a little longer at School.

N.B. Muckinfus gave me a Receipt for the 60 Dollars to pay the same to Mr Gervais [. . .].<sup>3</sup>

LB (ScHi). A continuation of Laurens to Gervais, October 8, 1777.

<sup>1</sup> This day Congress read an October 6 letter from Gen. Israel Putnam in Peekskill, N.Y., reporting that the British had just captured Fort Independence and that Peekskill itself was extremely vulnerable to enemy attack. PCC, item 159, fols. 103-4.

<sup>2</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:313.

<sup>3</sup> Approximately ten words indecipherable.

## William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Hond Sir

York Town Octr. 11th 1777

I wrote you the 6th Inst (I think) several detachd Letters with the fragments of the best Intelligence I cod then obtain of the late Action at German Town & engagd Mr Gerry to direct his Letter inclos-



ing a Copy of Gen. Washingtons to be opened & read by you, but found afterward that the Bearer (a Boston returning Express) woud go thro Litchfield to Symsbury &c so I suppose you will not have the advantage of it & perhaps not yet mine very soon. I have since obtained the Copy refered to & now inclose it, as also a Copy from J Mifflin to Genll Mifflin, which contains in substance all that We know about an Action which promised the fairest of any that ever happened, but in a moment Victory was snatched from Us, when within our Embrace. There seems something very importantly remarkable in this Event, it is the hand of God, most conspicuously, we were not prepared for so great a Salvation. How happy shod we have thot our Selves had the Issue been according to the most promising Hopes, but we shod have ascribed it to our own Strength & Prowess & sacrificed to our own [. . .] &c & still I do not see that we are any more prepared to give Glory to the God of armys; how unnatural & shocking that We so much neglect & forget him in that Character, as well as in every other, & if We ever succeed against our Enemies, till we are generally brot to a deeper sense of our own Sinfulness & [. . .] of such Liberties & Privileges as no People ever before enjoyed it will be a most illustrious Instance of the Patience & Forbearance of the Almighty & all gracious God, & another Demonstration that He is indeed good to the Evil & unthankful & that his Mercy endureth forever but how unspeakably more happy & merciful wo'd be our deliverance & Salvation preceeded by or accompanied with sincere Repentance & Reformation & without it the Lords Controversie with Us will not be ended.

I mentioned in my last the Delaware Frigate was in the hands of the Enemy supposed to be betrayed by the Capt. The thing is true but not the manner which indeed is not perfectly ascertained. It is said the Crew, mostly British prize Sailors, rose against the officers, confined them & delivered her up. It is also said She was coming up against the City for good purposes, & was suddenly fired upon & disabled by a secreted Battery of the Enemy. I rather suppose the former. Since which it is reported that Cap Barre &c has laid her on board & retaken her, & was fully credited but a Letter from the office of the Navy at Burlington of the 5th recd last night does not mention it, but it may have happened since that Date.<sup>1</sup>

Genl Washington has been joined by B Genll Varnum from Peekskill with abt 1200 Men since the Action of the 4th (& I suppose Genl Huntington is also with him, as he wrote me he was coming) & by Virginia Militia so as to be, it is said, three thousand stronger than before. Whether he intends to attack How again we know not. Have no acco of the behaviour of the Connecticut Troops under McDougal in Greens Division but it seems they come up late.

There is a great Misunderstanding between Genl. Arnold & Gen Gates, which gives us much pain.



Congress have been some Days engaged on the Confederation Plan, & have decided the great Question in favor of each States having one Vote, tho greatly opposed by a number & to the great dissatisfaction of Virginia.

Are now upon the mode & proportion of contribution, sundry plans are proposed, that of numbers is very strongly & forceably opposed, & the appearance is at present against it but I do not much expect we shall be able to find one attended with so few Exceptions or more equitable, tho I am certain this is far from perfect.

Our Affairs are hastening to a most important Crisis. God in infinite mercy grant it may be happy.

I can only add that I am with great Respect & Esteem, Your most obed. & most humble Servt,  
W Williams

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup>On the surrender of the Continental frigate *Delaware* to the British, see Marine Committee to Charles Alexander, September 26, 1777, note. The report that she had been retaken was false.

## Thomas Burke to John Sullivan

Sir,

York Oct. 12. 1777.

I was present at the action of Brandywine and saw and heard enough to convince me that the fortune of the day was injured by miscarriages where you commanded.

I understood you were several days posted with the command on the right wing; that you were cautioned by the Commander in Chief early in the day to be particularly attentive to the enemy's motions, who, he supposed would attempt to cross higher up the creek and attack your flank; that you were furnished with proper troops for reconnoitering, and yet you were so ill informed of the enemy's motions, that they came up at a time and by a route which you did not expect; that you conveyed intelligence to the Commander in Chief which occasioned his countermanding the dispositions he had made for encountering them on the rout by which it afterwards appeared they were actually advancing. That when at length the mistake was discovered you brought up your own Division by an unnecessary circuit of two miles, and in the greatest disorder, from which they never recovered, but fled from the fire of the enemy without resistance. That the miscarriages on that wing made it necessary to draw off a great part of the strength from the centre, which exposed Gen. Wayne to the superiority of the enemy.

I heard officers in the field lamenting in the bitterest terms that they were cursed with such a commander; and I overheard numbers during the retreat complain of you as an officer whose evil conduct

was forever productive of misfortunes to the army. From these facts I concluded that your duty as a General was not well performed, otherwise the enemy's motions on the wing where you commanded would not have been unknown to you during a great part of the day of action; nor could they have advanced by an unknown and unexpected rout, for you ought to have made yourself well acquainted with the ground. Nor would you have brought up your troops by an unnecessary circuit and in disorder, which exposed them to be surprised and broken.

I also concluded that the troops under your command had no confidence in your conduct, and from the many accounts I had officially received of your miscarriages I conceived and am still possessed of an opinion that you have not sufficient talents for your rank and office, tho' I believe you have strong dispositions to discharge your duty well.

I consider it as one essential part of my duty to attend to the appointments of the army and where I perceive that any person so unqualified as I deem you to be, has got into a command where incompetence may be productive of disasters and disgrace, it is my duty to endeavour at removing him. In discharge of this I gave to Congress all the information I was able, carefully distinguishing what I saw, what I heard, and from whom as far as I was acquainted with persons. I urged your recal with all the force I could, and thought it and still do think it necessary for the public good; because in all your enterprises and in every part of your conduct, even as represented by yourself, you seem to be void of judgment and foresight in concerting, of deliberate vigour in executing, and of presence of mind under accidents and emergencies; and from these defects seem to me to arise your repeated ill success. These seem to me to form the great essentials of a military character. Nor do I think you the only officer in our army who is deficient in them. Nor were my endeavours to free the army from insufficient officers intended to be confined to you. I scarcely know your person, and was not conscious of any injury from you. For a particular reason I should have had great pleasure in justly forming a better opinion of you; but no reason can induce me to overlook the defects of officers on whom so much depends. Nor will any thing deter me from pursuing the measures suggested by my own judgment. I have now related every thing which I acted, with relation to you in Congress, together with my motives. I have set down every intelligence, and the opinion I gave concerning you. What hills you struggled for, what fires you sustained, I neither saw or heard of. Your personal courage I meddled not with. I had no knowledge of it and I was cautious to say nothing unjust or unnecessary. My objection to you is, want of sufficient talents, and I consider it as your misfortune, not fault. It is my duty as far as I can, to prevent its being the misfortune of my country.

The purpose of this information is that you may indubitably know I gave Congress all the intelligence and opinions concerning you here set down; and then to ask in direct terms if you meant the disrespectful expressions in your late letter to Congress on the subject of your conduct at Brandywine, to be applied to me? If you did sir, I must inform you, you are mistaken in the matter contained in those expressions. My demeanour was entirely devoid of parade and ostentation and entirely simple and attentive. I did not gallop my horse at all but when I attempted to rally some of your flying troops.<sup>1</sup>

The manner of those expressions, which I suppose you meant for wit and sarcasm, is as unbecoming the soldier as the gentleman, and inconsistent with that plain and dignified simplicity which ought to be the stile of persons in either rank. Were quaint witticisms my talent I should not <sup>2</sup>

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> In his September 27 letter to President Hancock, which was read in Congress on October 10, Gen. John Sullivan lashed out at congressional critics of his conduct at the battle of Brandywine by accusing them of "Loading him with Blame, Infamy & Reproaches upon the false Representations of a Single Person who Don Quixot Like pranced at a Distance from the fight & felt as Little of the Severity of the Engagement as he knows about the Disposition of our Troops or that of the Enemy." Sullivan, *Letters* (Hammond), 1:462. Although Sullivan did not know that Burke was the "Don Quixot" in question when he wrote this letter to Hancock, after receiving Burke's letter of explanation he refused to retract any of his criticisms and bluntly informed the North Carolinian on October 27: "Your peremptory demand of an explanation of my letter to congress must be as peremptorily denied; so far as you are conscious the Garment suits I have no objection to your wearing it; that part which does not fit, you need not meddle with." *Ibid.*, p. 566. This exchange initiated a long feud between Burke and Sullivan that almost led to a duel in 1781. See *ibid.*, 2:35, 3:271-75, 296-98, 320-21; Charles P. Whittemore, *A General of the Revolution: John Sullivan of New Hampshire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), pp. 64-65, 67, 76-77, 82, 173; and John S. Watterson III, "Dr. Thomas Burke, A Revolutionary Career" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1970), pp. 107-19.

<sup>2</sup> According to the transcriber's note, "The remainder of this letter is wanting."

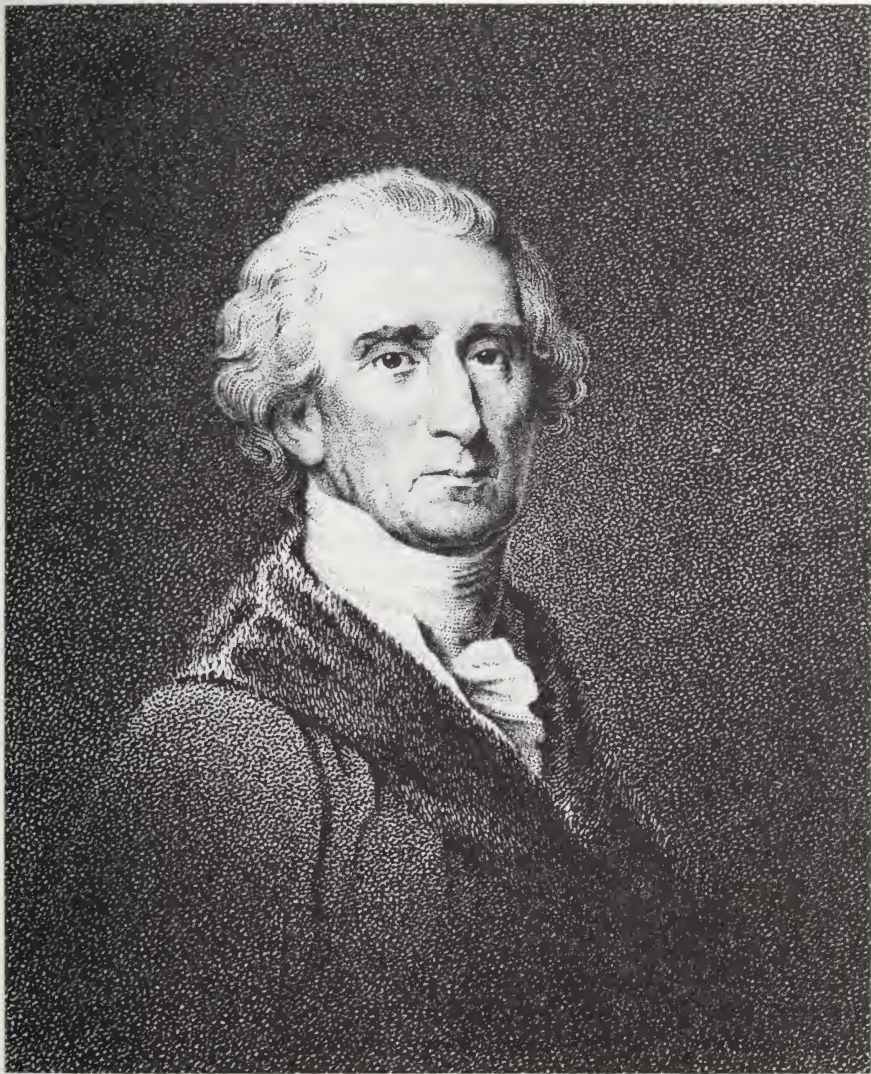
## Charles Carroll of Carrollton to Charles Carroll, Sr.

Dr. Papa,

York 12 Octo. 1777. P.M. 8 o'clock

I have just read letters from Gen Washington of the 7th & 9th instants; the former covered a return of the killed, wounded & missing in the late action of the 4th instant vizt. in the whole 1609—killed 116—wounded 397—missing 849. These 3 numbers only make 1472. How the deficiency arises I know not perhaps from some error of mine in taking down the numbers. On recollection the above numbers consist only of rank & file & the 137, the deficiency are com-





Charles Carroll of Carrollton



missioned officers. General Washington adds, since this return several of the missing have joined their respective brigades. Of the missing I suppose  $1/3$  are taken prisoners, the remainder have returned home or deserted into the country. By the letter of 9th it appears that the General has moved nearer the enemy in order to watch an opportunity of annoying or attacking them: he is now 26 miles from Pha. By all accounts the Enemy suffered considerably, particularly in officers. Gen Agnew killed, Gen. Grant dead of his wounds, Sir Wm. Erskine badly wounded, Ld. Cornwallis wounded in the neck. But we have no certain accounts of their total loss.<sup>1</sup> Our men are in good spirits and now think they can beat the Enemy, this opinion will probably contribute greatly to victory if we should attack again.

I fear the Enemy from N. York have got possession of Fort Montgomery in the highlands on north river. The Congress have recd. no authentic account of it, but the express, who brought letters from Gen. Gates of the 7th instant says he saw our frigates in flames, & Govr. Clinton, who had just time to retire from Fort Montgomery. We wait with impatience for the particulars of this event. Gen. Clinton means to open a passage thro' the highlands to Albany to come on the rear of Gates and relieve Burgoyne who can not advance, as Gates has three times his force & is strongly posted. Gates is strong enough to detach a part of his army to reinforce Putnam & still have a force superior to Burgoyne. They have Sunk Chevaux de frise a little above the highlands. If these obstructions are well done the Enemy's fleet may find it extreamly difficult to remove them, perhaps, impossible; in that case they must land their troops & march by land upwards of 100 miles before they can possess themselves of Albany.

I am informed by two gentlemen of veracity with whom I was acquainted in Canada, that they are confident Gates has now 20 thousand men; the Militia from Massachusetts & Connecticut were on their march when they came thro' those States. They left Boston yesterday fortnight & bring the following pleasing intelligence: that a prize was arrived at that city a little time before they left it with nine thousand pair of shoes & as many pair of stockings: a most seasonable supply. They were destined for the enemy's army at N. York & another prize was also brought into that port (a French vessel loaded with English property bound to Leghorn) whose cargo consisting of fine cloths will sell for 600,000 of continental money. The cargo (excepting a few bales the property of the Captain) was condemned; those bales & the vessel were given up as French property. By an intercepted letter in one of these prizes it appears that upwards of 200 French vessels were in the Thames freighted by English merchants to avoid our privateers. By a vessel from France, which brings accts lately in July they say an edict was issued by the King of France in consequence of the British act of Parlt. for seizing English-American property in whatever bottoms found & declaring that if

any of his subjects vessels having a regular clearance should be seized on that pretence, he would demand restitution & in case of refusal make reprisals.

Baron de Kalb who a few days ago was made a major General this day set off from hence to join General Washington. He is said to be a very good officer. We stand much in need of such. We hear that several officers in General Steven's division have lodged complaints agt. him. I believe them to be well founded for Stevens (*entre nous*) drinks.

I hope this campaign will yet end successfully for us. If Gen. Clinton has no greater force than what we have reason to think he has (about 3000) altho' he should gain the forts in the high lands, if the *cheveaux de frize* can not be weighed up, I flatter myself he will not be able to form a junction with Burgoyne, or make so powerful a diversion in his favor as to give him the ascendancy over Gates. Washington will act on the offensive; and consequently must be stronger than Howe. The event of battles however depends on so many incidents, that it is difficult to decide for whom victory will declare. Our cause is just, our men are becoming more warlike, the blood already spilt will raise a spirit of obstinacy & revenge which will supply the place in some measure of discipline. We have many resources, if we have sense enough to [use] them; then let us hope we shall make use of them, and that we shall conquer in the end. My love to Molly, Mrs. Darnall & the little ones. I sincerely wish you a continuance of health and am, yr. affectionate Son,

Ch. Carroll of Carrollton

P.S. I had almost forgot to mention that the Enemy who had taken possession of Billingsport on the Jersey side of the Delaware below Fort Mifflin have evacuated in it—I suppose to reinforce Howe. The intercepted letter from England mentioned above complains much of the decay of trade, & intimated that unless something decisive is done this campaign great disturbances will arise in England. The letter is from a custom house officer to his friend or relation at New York.

RC (MdHi).

<sup>1</sup> A brief letter Carroll wrote to his father on October 11, in which he had discussed some of this same information, is also in the Carroll Papers, MdHi.

## John Hancock to Philip Schuyler

My dear Sir, York Town Pennsylv. October 12th. 1777.

I was duely honoured with your Favour of the 27th ulto. and immediately laid it before Congress; in Consequence of which they have

referred to the Committee of Inquiry, and the Committee for Indian Affairs those Parts of your Letter that fall within the Line of their respective Business & appointment. As soon as Congress come to any Resolve on the Subject, I will immediately transmit it by Express.<sup>1</sup> Wishing you every Happiness and Good, I am with the utmost Respect, Sir, your most obed Serv.

J.H. Presid.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A).

<sup>1</sup> For General Schuyler's September 27 letter to Hancock, see PCC, item 153, 3:252, item 170, 3:219-21. In it Schuyler requested a copy of the charges against him in connection with the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence in July 1777, but Congress did not draw them up until June 1778. See *JCC*, 9:785-87, 11:593-603; and Hancock to Arthur St. Clair and Philip Schuyler, August 5, 1777, note.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir, York Town: Pennsylvania, October 12th. 1777.

I have Nothing in Charge from Congress at this Time, but to transmit the enclosed Resolves,<sup>1</sup> and to request your Attention to them.

The Information that the Enemy have at different Times compelled our Troops who are Prisoners with them to labour, and that a Number are at this Time actually engaged in throwing up some Works at and near Kensington, is of such a Nature that Congress think it incumbent on them to inquire into the Truth of it. They have therefore directed that a Flag be immediately dispatched to Genl. Howe to know whether there is any Foundation for the Report; and I am to request you will send a Flag for this Purpose as soon as you conveniently can.<sup>2</sup>

Monsr. Le Balme having desired Leave of Congress to resign his Commission as Inspector of the Cavalry, they have accordingly complied with his Request.<sup>3</sup>

I have the Honour to be, with the utmost Respect, Sir, your most obed. & very hble Servt.

John Hancock Presidt.

2 oClock P.M. Your Fav'r. of 7th Inst.<sup>4</sup> has but this moment come to hand.

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush, with signature and postscript by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to the resolves discussed in the body of this letter, Hancock also enclosed resolves of October 10 and 11 on the commissariat of hides and the promotion of Silas Talbot. *JCC*, 9:793-96.

<sup>2</sup> Washington informed Congress on October 16 that this intelligence about British mistreatment of American prisoners "was without foundation" and consequently Congress erased from the journals the resolve of this date directing



Washington to write to Howe about the matter. See *JCC*, 9:797; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:381-82.

<sup>3</sup> See *JCC*, 9:797.

<sup>4</sup> This letter is in *PCC*, item 152, 5:89-92, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:319-23.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir

York 12th Octobr. 1777

I have had the honour of receiving your favours under the 27th September & 3d Curr. The Gentleman whom you directed to call on me received my advice to apply to the Committee of foreign affairs to which I added an assurance of doing him all the service in my power if his application should come before Congress, since which I have learned nothing more of the Subject nor seen him.<sup>1</sup>

If you committed any charge to me respecting Mr. De Valfort's my memory has been so treacherous as to lose it, for which I beg pardon, & request a repetition when I have your Commands, in writing my Eyes will assist & my inclination will be prompt upon every occasion to demonstrate my respect & attachment.<sup>2</sup>

I could find upon enquiry no good or certain conveyance for your packet from any of the neighbouring ports, how can there be one when all are hemmed in by the Enemy's Ships of War. Having therefore a faithful Messenger going to Charles Town I have Sent it directly to Mr. President Rutledge indorsing your request in a particular manner of his attention to send it forward & referred to the directions which you had superscribed. It will probably be delivered into his hands on the 25th Inst. & I am morally certain he will find a good conveyance before this Month expires. I shall be happy if this measure meets your approbation.

No Letters that I can learn of are arrived for you from France but I here Inclose one which was delivered to me by Monsr. Dubuysson.

The Aspect of our Northern affairs is a little Clouded. General Putnam writes on the 5th inst. that 2500 of the Enemy conducted from New York in Transports & Convoyed by Men of War had landed within five Miles of Peek's Kill, that he had not 1000 Continental Troops with him & few Militia—of these he had made the best disposition, that Governor Clinton had arrived at Fort Montgomery whose presence he hoped would animate & bring in the Militia, but that in his present weak state although he would exert every nerve in the defense of the important posts committed to his charge, he could not warrant & did not hold himself answerable. He is a brave Officer in the field, cautious & timid only upon paper, therefore I am not diffident of his success. Before this day, I should suppose Somewhat decisive has been done in the special department under General Gates.



The Action of the 4th at German Town is a Subject for a condolence & congratulation, tis very evident we ran away from complete victory which had invited us to proceed & embrace her. It cannot be doubted but your Excellency is acquainted with particulars therefore I will only add that the several & distinct Accounts of four General Officers of the Enemy Vizt Agnew, Sr. W. Erskine, Kniphausen & Grant having fallen are attended by such circumstantial proofs as put them little below the line of certainty. I have the honour to be with the most respectful esteem &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Lafayette's September 27 letter to Laurens is in Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:112-13. Laurens unsuccessfully tried to secure a Continental commission for the bearer of it, Lt. François-Joseph Dorset, and at length was obliged to recommend him for an appointment in the South Carolina militia. See Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, November 18, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Although Lafayette was seeking a Continental brigadier general's commission for Col. Louis Silvestre Valfort, Valfort left America at the end of October because of poor health before the appointment could be made. Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:18, 87, 128-35.

## Richard Henry Lee to Arthur Lee

My dear Brother, York Town in Pensylva. 13th Octr. 1777

I heard with much pleasure that you were destined to the Court of Berlin, because I think you may be able to do your Country essential services there. The power and the magnanimity of the Prussian Monarch puts him above apprehensions from the Court of London for pursuing measures dictated by true generosity and the interest of his people. A Port in the North for our Privateers, Prizes, and for the conduct of Commerce, will much benefit both countries. It is indisputably certain that a most extensive and mutually beneficial commerce may be carried on between the dominions of Prussia and the United States; but it is unfortunate for us, that whilst we are left singly to oppose the whole force of G. Britain (young as we are in war), we are prevented from giving experimental proofs of the benefits of our commerce, by the impossibility of sending our products, or getting those of other Countries. His Prussian Majesty has power, by a variety of ways, to call away much of the British attention from us and thereby facilitating commercial intercourse. Add to this, that the public acknowledgement of the Independency of these States, by his Prussian Majesty, would give dignity, and advantage to our cause, and procure the same acknowledgement from other Powers. The Committee have written so fully of the events of war in their public letter that I need not add here to what they have said; unless it be to say that our continued accounts confirm the great loss sus-

tained by the enemy on the 4th instant, in the battle of German Town. We understand that Generals Agnew and Grant are dead, and that Sr. Wm Erskine is mortally wounded. Some reports place Gen. Kephausen among the slain, and Lord Cornwallis with the wounded. Our Army is, by reinforcements, stronger now than before the last battle, in high spirits, and we expect will give Gen. Howe further amusement in a short time. Suffer me here to observe a little upon the enemies possession of Philadelphia. In Europe, where our affairs are ill understood, perhaps it may make some noise; with us, it is really of little importance. When first we entered into this war, we not only considered, but absolutely declared that we considered our great Towns, as not defensible—But that the possession of these would avail little towards the accomplishment of the views of our enemies. In truth they are but spots in the great Map of North America. But it is far from being certain that Gen. Howe will retain Philadelphia two months. We know that during the last battle [he] had given orders for his baggage to cross the Schuylkil, and the friends of government, as he calls the detestable enemies of their Country, to quit the Town. Boston was once theirs, but now no longer so. It will be worth while to counteract the magnified falsehoods of our enemies concerning this subject. What is become of our brother,<sup>1</sup> we hear nothing of him. I have never received the Bark from Mr. Gardoqui, but you may be assured it is extremely wanted by myself and my family. I make no doubt but you will do the best for my boys in conjunction with their Uncle—but if they cannot remain to be tolerably finished in France, let them be sent by the first good opportunity to me.

I am with the most tender affection and faithful friendship yours,  
Richard Henry Lee

RC (ViU).

<sup>1</sup> That is, William Lee.

## Samuel Chase to Thomas Johnson

Dear Sir, York Town. Octr. 14. 1777. Tuesday Night

By a letter from Genl. Putnam of the 8th from Peek's kill, we are informed, that the Enemy in the Morning of the 6th landed a Body of Troops, above King's ferry, on the west Side of Hudson's River; In the afternoon they attacked fort Montgomery. The Engagement was very warm & severe, both of Cannon and Musquetry, for three Hours. The Garrison consisting of 600 Men, behaved with the greatest Gallantry & repulsed the Enemy (above five Times their Number) three Times; at length after an obstinate Defence the Enemy possessed themselves of the fort, about the Dusk of the Even-

ing, which favoured the Retreat of General James Clinton, Governor Clinton, several officers and a Number of privates. Our whole Loss in killed, wounded and missing is only 250. The Enemy suffered very considerably. Their Design is to releive Genl. Burgoyne. Govr. Clinton will exert himself to collect the New York Militia, Genl. Parsons is gone from Peek's kill to Connecticut to forward their Militia, who were coming in great Numbers to join Genl. Putnam.

Genl. Burgoyne on the 7th was encamped on the Heights on the west side of Hudsons River, within about two Miles of Gen. Gates Camp on Beekmans Heights. The latter had then above 12,000 Men, & considerable Reinforcements of Militia, some say 8,000, were on their March to join him; the former had not then at most above 6000 Men, and Genl. Gates is informed not above three Weeks provisions. In this Situation he must either attack Gates in a strong fortified Camp, & force his Way, or he must retreat. To releive him from this distressing alternative Genl. Clinton is attempting to join him.

We have a letter from Genl. W. of the 10th, he was then 26 Miles from Philadelphia. On last Thursday Night about 12 o'Clock a severe & heavy Cannonade began between our Gallies, and a Party of the Enemy, who were attempting to erect a Battery at Webbes, on the lowest Ferry on Skuikill. It continued till 8 o'Clock Fryday Morning, & was renewed on Saturday Morning. The Event is not known. It is supposed the Enemy design to cross over to province Island, & from thence annoy our Garrison in Fort Mifflin. The Enemy have attempted once or twice to raise the Chaveaux de frize, and were compelled to desist by the Gallies. Colo. Saml. Smith, of our State, commands at Fort Mifflin.

My Compliments to the Gentlemen of the Council.

Your affectionate Friend and obedient Servt. Saml. Chase

RC (PHi). Tr (MdHi). RC damaged; missing words supplied from Tr.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir, York Town. Pennsylvania. October 14th. 1777.

I have been duely honored with your several Favours of the 7th, 8th, and 10th continued to the 11th in the Order of their respective Dates, and immediately laid them before Congress.<sup>1</sup>

I have ordered one Thousand Copies of the Resolves relative to putting a Stop to any Intercourse between the Enemy in Philada. and the disaffected among us, to be printed at Lancaster, and to be forwarded thence to you for the Use of the Army.<sup>2</sup>

Having Nothing more in Charge from Congress, I shall only refer

your Attention to the inclosed Resolves,<sup>3</sup> and assure you, that I am, with the utmost Respect & Esteem, Sir, your most obed hble Servt.

John Hancock Presidt

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup>These letters are in PCC, item 152, 5:89-92, 97, 101-3, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:319-23, 332, 349-52.

<sup>2</sup>These resolves had been passed on October 8. *JCC*, 9:784.

<sup>3</sup>These were October 13 resolves on French officers and money and supplies for the army. *JCC*, 9:798-99. On the 13th Hancock had also written a brief personal letter to Brig. Gen. William Woodford, commander of the Second Virginia Regiment, wishing him a "speedy Recovery" from the wound he had received at Brandywine. Peter Force Collection, DLC.

## Henry Laurens to John Rutledge

Dear Sir

14th Octobr 1777

I had the honour of writing to your Excellency the day preceeding the flight of people from Philadelphia, which I had left by very sober steps being lame the evening of that day. My writing I believe is not worth your Excellencys attention as the Subjects are now all Stale & obsolete. I found my Packet in the hands of tardy Messengers in this town & as it contains I beleive the last printed News & letters for others I have ventured to charge it upon Mukinfuss by whom I had not intended to have given you further trouble not doubting but that better hands had communicated all the Intelligence this place affords & having also desired Colonel Gervais to acquaint Your Excellency with such as I have transmitted to him. But this minute as Mukinfuss was mounting I collected several Scraps, some of them very Interesting which possibly may not be immediately sent by any body else, these are marked upon a paper inclosed.

I am extremely sorry I have not had the honour of addressing you by this opportunity in a public Letter. I can only say that tis not my fault & at the same that I know of nobody to blame. &ca.

LB (ScHi).

## James Lovell to John Langdon

Dear Sir,

Octr 14 [1777] York Town

I made you a promise in my last to be more lengthy at next writing but verily I think it needless to say any thing about the affairs of General Washington's army as they stand at present, because it is impossible but that General Sullivan must have been very full to



your Assembly. He has been treated in such a manner as to make it his highest interest to be quite particular to his connexions. It may not be amiss, however, in me to give you the clue to our ill success in that part of Pennsylvania which borders upon the Brandywine where I hoped Mr Howe would be long detained, or I should have been less encouraging in some of my past letters to my friends. It was the opinion of General Greene constantly and also of Genl Washington himself that Howe's first object was worsting our army before he could attempt Philadelphia; but such was the wonder and discontent of most classes of people at having Philadelphia left open, by our army keeping always the right of Howe's left wing, with a determination to study a defeat of him in that part, that our General was obliged to post himself too long at Newark and gave Howe opportunity to cross high up the Brandywine. After the battle of the 12th it was a severe long continued rain that put our army into a condition unfit for battle and made a retreat necessary. For the enemy were without their tents as well as we, yet they had good blankets, were better clothed and had tin cases for their cartridges while our men lost 700,000 as I have been well informed. It is inconceivable almost how they suffered by passing breast high through water sometimes, and by marches in some very hard country. The General now writes as if he had good hope of finishing the campaign well. God grant it. As to the Northern army, there is as usual a growing discontent among the leaders. I fear Arnold has taken for his motto, aut Caesar aut nullus, and yet is only an instrument in the operations of S——r.<sup>1</sup> It will be hard to prevent factions against General Gates with a known enemy and a very aspiring half friend at best in his department watching and *writing* at him.

I have information that not less success in prizes appears in your ports at the Eastward than what I told you of at Carolina; yet, it is said, every thing is extravagant. There is a very great want of shoes, stockings &c. in this Middle Army. I hope you will not be backward to supply them with your overplus, but I equally hope you will not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon as heretofore. You have *thanklessly* neglected your own soldiers through New England—let it be so no more. Indeed you have prevented exertions in the Middle States by your over-care for them.

Your friend and servant,

J.L.

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> That is, Gen. Philip Schuyler.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Dr. Sir,

York Town Octr. 14th. 1777

Your Letter for Genl. Gates waits an Express which I expect will go for the Nothern Department in a day or two. The late act appointing a Council of Safety is flattering to my expectations as the immediate vigorous exertions of that Board,<sup>1</sup> in cooperation with the Board of War here, which is ordered to correspond with the former and with their assistance to procure Shoes, Stockings and other supplies for the army, I doubt not will produce the most salutary effects. Genl. Washington writes that the Service is greatly impeaded for the want of these articles, that great numbers of men are detained in the Hospitals, for no other reason but that they are bearfooted, besides necessities of the Troops in the field. Shall this be permitted when our worst Enemies the Tories are abundantly supplied? Is it not reasonable to look to this quarter and that our avowed Enemies through the tract the Enemy passed and universally through the States should spare of their superfluities at least? and if either lack should it be our Army on which under God our lives, liberties & fortunes depend? Mr. Henry informs that greater quantities of leather is at Lancaster ever known; great quantities I am informed is also here, from Mr. Henry's account as well as by information from a principle hand here, the Tanners are willing to part with their Leather for green hides. The board of war has informed me they will order green Hides for Leather and have promised to write you on the Subject, but if it should be omitted through hurry, let this information assure you of the fact, as delays may prove dangerous, therefore I take the liberty to recommend to take the Leather at Lancaster and to do the same here and elsewhere I would have you aware that it is expected you will take the lead as it would be an interference with the internal police to do otherwise. I mention this to remove former suspicions and that you may expect no other than a constant Correspondence and such good Offices as the Board of War can render. With submission I think a number of Shoemakers should be immediately employed and registered as Servants to the publick, and that what you do should be communicated to the Board of War and so vice versa that you may not unduely depend one on the other. It is recommended that in your dealings you give certificates. I am told by one of the Officers of the State that Coll. McColleston of a large number of Shoes, some concealed in his bed Chamber, has delivered but a trifling quantity, I mean to say that the Gentleman in whom the State has the fullest dependance gave information of the Shoes, and that the Board of War say comparatively few has been delivered. The horrid sience of extortion here is shocking, butter has got to 10/ per lb, Eggs 2/ per dozen and other articles in proportion, is there no way to put a stop to these enormities. I am not to direct to the immediate steps that may be thought necessary by the Board of

Safety, but I am bold to say no such effectual measures can be devised, as the strictest Oeconomy, opening the Courts of Justice and a heavy taxation, these will be more effectual than an Army with Banners as the Depreciation of our Currency is more to be dreaded, at present the people have no manner of use for money, but as soon as found necessary for Taxes, Court Fees &c, it will recover the credit of our money. Yesterday we are informed from Massachusetts that they have laid on a second Tax, the first for One hundred & five thousand pounds and the latter for Three hundred & fifty thousands at the rate of 6/ to a Dollar. This seems an incredible burthen, but we are told the people cry out for heavy taxes well knowing that the money that remains in their pockets is of more value than the whole would be. Besides it shows their wisdom as the earliest Taxes will be most easily paid, on account of the great quantities of circulating Cash.

Fort Montgomery is taken but I trust by the exertions of Genl. Gates and his Army and the aids which I make no doubt will pour in to Peek's Kill, affairs will yet go well to the Northward, and may we not hope God will bless our Arms in this State. The mention of the State is enough to raise a blush for my Country. Can no way be devised to animate and call to our assistance the back Inhabitants. I forgot to mention that Indian Affairs both North & South, are in the most promising train, and Colo. Morgans account now here is no way discouraging to the westward.<sup>2</sup> Thro the medium of Congress a Rattle trap and Turkeys Tail was sent by numerous tribes at the Southward to their Brethren to the Northward, and Genl. Schyler informs that 140 had joined our Army and that many more were expected and what is more flattering that a number of the tribe of St. Francis had desired protection to their families, and liberty to remove to Connecticut. Some of the principle Articles of Confederation have passed, and I expect it will be finished in a few days, knowing this also is necessary to our Salvation. I am obliged to write you in this manner for want of time and having a miserable instrument in my hand. I hope my great freedom will be excused, as I have no other motive than the principle which influences your breast. With most respectful Regards to your Honbl. Board, I am respectfully, Dr. Sir, Yr. most ob. & very huml. Serv, Daniel Roberdeau

P.S. I write with the greatest confidence as well as freedom, as the times require it.

I endeavoured to obtain an Election [Ellection?] which was held but I do not know what was done.

RC (PHC).

<sup>1</sup> For the October 17 proclamation announcing creation of the Pennsylvania Council of Safety, as well as the minutes of its proceedings to its dissolution on December 6, 1777, see *Pa. Council Minutes*, 11:325-53.

<sup>2</sup> A letter from George Morgan of October 13, which has not been found, was read in Congress this day. *JCC*, 9:801.



## John Adams to Abigail Adams

My dearest Friend

York Town Octr. 15. 1777

I have not been able of late to keep up my Correspondence with you, so constantly, as my Heart inclined me to do. But I hope now to write you oftener—but I dont incline to write, very particularly, least my Letters should be intercepted.

I am in tolerable Health, but oppressed, with a Load of public Cares.

I have long foreseen, that We should be brought down to a great Degree of Depression before the People of America would be convinced of their real Danger, of the true Causes of it, and be stimulated to take the necessary Steps for a Reformation.

Government and Law in the states, large Taxation, and Strict Discipline in our Armies, are the only Things Wanting, as human Means. These with the Blessing of Heaven, will certainly produce Glory, Tryumph, Liberty and Safety and Peace, and nothing but these will do.

I long with the Utmost Impatience to come home—dont send a servant for me. The Expençe is so enormous that I cannot bear the Thought of it. I will crawl home, upon my little Pony, and wait upon myself as well as I can. I think you had better sell my Horse.

The People are universally calling for Fighting and for Blood. Washington is getting into the Humour of fighting and How begins to dread it—and well he may. Fighting will certainly answer the End altho We may be beaten every Time for a great While.

We have been heretofore greatly deceived conc[ern]ing the Numbers of Militia. But there are Numbers enough if they knew how to fight, which as soon as their Generals will let them, they will learn. I am, with every tender Sentiment, yours forevermore.

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:353–54.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir,

York, 16 October 1777.

Yesterday by the hand of Mr. Lawrence a Brother of my Neighbor at the distillery I sent you all the Intelligence of the day,<sup>1</sup> this Morning has produced me the enclosed Letter from my Son & Copy of Eastern Intelligence on which I congratulate with the freinds of America.<sup>2</sup>

Colo. Pinckney is not come in yet, I wish I had J.L.'s Letter by him, tis probable it contains minutia.

A long Letter this Morning from General Washington,<sup>3</sup> it does not appear that he has in contemplation an immediate attack upon the



Enemy, on the contrary he complains of the want of many essential articles. He is the most to be pitied of any Man I know. These essentials are to be had & now I suppose will be. Had they been provided sometime ago with those articles we should have prevented hundreds perhaps Thousands of desertions & there would have been no Howe in Philadelphia. O what my Pen could truly tell you would I indulge it. But I must not at present. A Letter from Camp General Smallwood of the 14th maintains notwithstanding Mr. Humphry's New Lying Paper that the loss of the Enemy in killed & wounded & prisoners the 4th Inst. was not less than 1600—indeed the glaring, the impudent Lies published under Gen. Howe's permission in Philadelphia which you will see in J.L.'s Letter invalidates every thing they say.<sup>4</sup>

Our President gave notice yesterday of his purpose to quit the Chair & Congress next week. I moved the House to intreat & solicit his continuance, to my surprise I was seconded & *no more*.<sup>5</sup>

Several other Members are about leaving us, I regret the apparent defection. Our House will be reduced in a few days to barely twenty or twenty one Members. Mr Hall now waits for me. I will only desire my Compliments to His Excellency, to Mr & Mrs Manigault, to Mrs. Gervais & to each other friend &ca.

P.S. Dont let the good News from Eastward lull you. The struggle here will be arduous but tis far from impossible & we ought to beleive it probable Ships & Troops will attempt a Winter expedition to the Southward. Let us be prepared—it will be Wise if there should be no attack—to be prepared may discourage an attack.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens' brief and uninformative October 15 letter to Gervais is in the Laurens Papers, ScHi.

<sup>2</sup> Col. John Laurens' October 15 letter to his father, transmitting news of Gates' victory over Burgoyne at the battle of Bemis Heights on October 7, is in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 60–61. On the verso of this letter Henry Laurens made the following notations sometime after learning about Burgoyne's surrender to Gates: "1 Lt Gen. 2 Major Generals. 7 Brig. 2 Eng, 1 Irish Noblem. A qty of Clothing. 5000 Privats. 1500 Stand Arms. 40 Brass Cann[o]n." Ibid., p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> Washington's October 13 letter to President Hancock is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:364–68.

<sup>4</sup> Brig. Gen. William Smallwood's letter is not mentioned in the journals.

<sup>5</sup> There is no mention in the journals for October 15 of John Hancock's intended resignation as president. Eventually Hancock took his leave of Congress and delivered a florid farewell speech to the delegates on October 29. At that time either James Duane or William Duer of New York caused a minor furor by moving that Congress formally thank Hancock for his faithful service as president. Congress considered this motion on October 31, at which time opponents offered a counter motion that "it is improper to thank any president for the discharge of the duties of that office." The substitute motion was defeated by a tie vote of five states to five, and Congress then passed the original motion of thanks by a vote of six states to four. Much to Laurens' chagrin, Congress elected him

as Hancock's successor on November 1. See *JCC*, 9:846, 852-54; Hancock to Washington, October 17, and to Dorothy Hancock, October 18; and Samuel Adams to James Warren, October 30, 1777. There is a humorous, loyalist burlesque of Hancock's farewell speech in Frank Moore, ed., *Diary of the American Revolution from Newspapers and Original Documents*, 2 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner, 1860), 1:517-18. William Fowler, "John Hancock: The Paradoxical President," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 130 (July 1976): 164-77, surveys Hancock's presidency of Congress.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear son,

York Town 16 October 1777

Your favours first by express & next by Colo. Pinckney are both come to hand & are now both on their Journey to Charles Town where they will be very acceptable as they have been here to several, & both merit my particular thanks.

Yesterday a Letter of yours of the 26th of Septr. came to hand, I fancy one of mine about the 8th or 9th Inst. is also lagging by the way.

The enclosed is from Major Butler relative to two Horses which he hopes are in Colo. Moylan's hand & if found to be sent to mine, if you learn anything of them be so polite as to inform me.

Poor Berry! I am sorry for him, James is absent today endeavouring to get Fish, when he returns I will enquire & if the Truss is in our possession send it on, otherwise get another when you let me know the side of the weak part.

I am writing in Congress & in the midst of much talk (not regular Congress) buz! says one "I would if I had been Commander of that Army with such powers have procured all the necessities which are said to be wanted without such whining Complaints."

"I would says 2d have prevented the amazing desertions which have happened, it only wants proper attention at fountain head." 3d "It is very easy too to prevent intercourse between the Army & the Enemy & as easy to gain Intelligence but we never mind who comes in & who goes out of our Camp."

"In short 4th our Army is under no regulation nor discipline" &c & &c &c.<sup>1</sup>

You know I abhor tell tales but these sounds hurt me exceedingly. I know the effects of loose Tongues, I know the cruelty of tongues speaking the fulness of designing hearts. Nevertheless I am afraid there may be some ground for some of these remarks, a good Heart may be too diffident, too apprehensive of doing right righteous proper Acts, lest such should be interpreted arbitrary. But good God, shall we [save?] five hundred & destroy five Million. The subject is too delicate to dwell upon I wish I was well acquainted with the Man

whom I think, all in all, the first of the Age, & that he would follow my advice. He accepted the opinion of some who have no superior claim all vanity apart. The Croud is too great on each hand. All that I have said is between us. I will only add that your continued & particular advices consistent with that honour by which you are more strongly bound than you are by even Duty to a Father will oblige me & many distant Friends.

Adieu my Dear Son,

Henry Laurens

RC (SchI).

<sup>1</sup> The foregoing remarks were apparently occasioned by the complaints Washington made in an October 13 letter to President Hancock, which was read in Congress this day. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:364-68.

## Henry Laurens to John Rutledge

Dear Sir

York 16th October 1777.

The Welfare of the So. Carolina State is ever a Subject of Your Excellencys attention & study. I intreat your Excellency to consider how essential it will be in order to promote that great end to urge the Assembly without delay to Send a full Representation to Congress. If I had no other Cause of Complaint but that of the burthen which will lie on me when Mr. Heyward retires which will be in a very few days I would be Silent but as a Citizen I have a right to complain of the insufficiency of the Representation which will then remain & to blame those through whose neglect my Country Shall in any instance Suffer.

In Obedience to the Order of Congress & in absence of other Members of the Committee of Commerce, I take the Liberty of inclosing a Resolution of Yesterday which is thought to be of importance.<sup>1</sup> I request Your Excellency will order the publication to be made in the Gazettes at Charles Town to be continued at least Six Months & Copies to be Sent to France & the French West Indies & as many as possible to be distributed among the Seamen belonging to England which may be done by means of our Friends in France.

LB (SchI).

<sup>1</sup> The enclosed resolve, which was actually passed on October 14, stated that henceforth "any vessel or cargo, the property of any British subject, not an inhabitant of Bermuda or any of the Bahama islands, brought into any of these United States by the masters or mariners shall be adjudged lawful prize." *JCC*, 9:802, 804. Congress passed this resolve in order to deter the British from encouraging American captains and crews to desert and turn their ships and cargos over to the British. See Laurens to James Duane, December 24, 1777.

In this regard it is pertinent to note that about this time Congress also ordered the publication of some October 6 resolves concerning captured British seamen and the destruction of American vessels and supplies. Although this order was



not recorded in the journals, the resolves were sent to the states with a covering note by Secretary Charles Thomson: "All printers are desired to insert & continue the foregoing resolutions in their public newspapers at least six months." *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 5:647; and *JCC*, 9:776-77. After his election as president of Congress Laurens himself belatedly sent a copy of these resolves to Commissary of Prisoners Elias Boudinot. See Laurens to Boudinot, November 14, 1777, Boudinot Papers, DLC.

## Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry

Dear Sir

York Town 16th Octr. 1777.

I congratulate you most sincerely on the very important intelligence that I have now the pleasure to enclose you, which came express this morning to the President in a letter from Colo. Trumbull the deputy paymaster General.<sup>1</sup> We every moment expect an express from Gen Gates with a more full account of this glorious victory. Gen Clinton having received a reinforcement and knowing Burgoyne's critical Situation, was urging his way up Hudson River to relieve him, and had actually taken Fort Montgomerie on the Highlands, after a severe conflict and much loss. Gens Putnam and Parsons were between Clinton and Albany with some continental troops and a large body of Militia. This last General will now be compelled to return to his hiding place in the Island of York. The enemy have been foiled in various attempts to possess themselves of Fort Mifflin on Delaware, and were lately driven from Province Island by the Gallymen with the loss of 53 men and 2 officers taken, and a 32 pounder brought there to annoy our Fort.<sup>2</sup> Since the battle of German Town they have evacuated Billingsport, and it is now in our possession, where we have placed some large Cannon to stop their Ships. The General has sent a party to secure Red Bank, almost opposite the Fort, so that we have great expectations of preventing the enemy from getting to Philadelphia, in which case, Gen. Howe's situation must be a dangerous one. Our troops are now in possession of the Country all around Philadelphia and the enemy, so that their distress for provisions must soon be very great. What the people in Town will do, God knows. Sour flour sells already for 30/ hard money a hundred. In a short time I hope to send you more important news both from this quarter and the North. Our army is in high spirits, and advancing upon the enemy who are entrenching themselves. I am with great regard, dear Sir, sincerely,

Richard Henry Lee

MS not found; reprinted from Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:102-3.

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Trumbull, Jr.'s October 10 letter to Eliphalet Dyer, which was read in Congress this day, apparently contained the first report received by the delegates of General Gates' October 7 victory over Burgoyne's troops at Bemis



Heights. See *JCC*, 9:808; and James Lovell to the Massachusetts Council, this date.

<sup>2</sup> An account of this action was included in the October 11 letter of William Bradford and John Hazelwood to Washington, a copy of which was enclosed with Washington's October 13 letter to Hancock. See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:356n, 364.

## James Lovell to the Massachusetts Council

Gentlemen

York Town Octr. 16th. 1777

The Committee of Congress for foreign Affairs desire your care and direction for forwarding the inclosed Packet to France by the first trusty person who may sail from Boston or any neighbouring port. You will be pleased to give order that it may be destroyed rather than fall into the Enemy's hand at sea, and that it should not be risked by common post conveyance in France, but be delivered to Mr. Williams at Nantes, or to an Agent of our Commissioners at some other seaport, or conveyed, by the person himself to whom you shall intrust it, to Paris, where his expences will be reimbursed.

I sincerely congratulate the honourable Council upon the success of our northern army. We have only a general account from Mr Trumbull D.P.M.G. at Albany in a Letter to Coll. Dyer which had been opened by Genl. Washington and forwarded. Doubtless, you will have a much more particular narrative of the battle of the 7th near Behmus's than what we have. Indeed I have strong hopes that the Enemy will not be able to reach Tyconderoga without greater loss then they suffered nine days ago.

The army under Genl. Washington, tho' very deficient in many necessaries, is in good spirits, and will, I hope, be stimulated by the conduct of the brave northern forces to some capital exertion, shortly, near Philadelphia.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, Your most obedt. humb. Servant,

James Lovell

P.S. It is desired that the Gazettes of Boston for a month back may be sent to our Commissioners with the packet inclosed, when opportunity shall offer; the Printer to charge the Committee for foreign Affairs, whose Secretary ought to have written to the Printers in the several States, long since, to keep a Course of Papers for such occasions.

RC (M-Ar).

## Henry Marchant to Esek Hopkins

Dear Sir,

York Oct. 16. 1777

At Length the Papers you have so long been delayed a Sight of have been found. A Copy Whereof I enclose, having but this Day been favoured with them from the Secretary.<sup>1</sup>

I give you joy upon the very favourable Accounts from the Northward. Appearances are by no Means unfavourable in This Department, And we have the greatest Reason to hope by the Blessing of Heaven, for a happy Conclusion to this Campaign. I hope to have the Pleasure of seeing You in November. In the mean Time I remain your Friend & Servant,

Hy. Marchant

RC (RHi).

<sup>1</sup> On July 4 Commodore Hopkins had written to Marchant and asked for copies of "all the Complaints . . . to Congress or to the Marine Board" that had led to his suspension as commander of the Continental Navy on March 26, 1777. Alverda S. Beck, ed., *The Letter Book of Esek Hopkins, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Navy, 1775-1777* (Providence: Rhode Island Historical Society, 1932), p. 143. For a discussion of Hopkins' suspension and eventual dismissal from service, see Marine Committee Examination of John Grannis, March 25, 1777.

## John Penn to Richard Caswell

Dear Sir,

York Town, Oct. 16th. 1777.

We are this minute informed of a Victory obtained by Genl Gates, over Genl Burgoyne. We attacked and forced their lines, took 500 prisoners, killed many, got 9 Brass field pieces from 9 to 12 lbs, 330 Tents with their kettles &c. The Enemy retreated in the night, we are in pursuit of them towards Ticonderoga. Our loss was trifling except Genls. Arnold & Lincoln both wounded in their legs. These were very great officers. In the late Battle between Genls. Washington & Howe, most of the North Carolina Troops were engaged, and behaved well. Capt. Martin was arrested for Cowardice. I have not heard the event. Genl Nash died two days after. Col Polk's son wounded, not bad. I expect there will be another battle soon. Your son is well. I am with due respect, sir, your Obedt Servt.

J. Penn

[P.S.] Excuse haste and little paper.

Tr (Nc-Ar).

## Committee of Intelligence to Hall and Sellers

Gentlemen

[October 17, 1777]<sup>1</sup>

Congress having authorised their Committee of Intelligence to get a Press fixed in this Town, I am, as Chairman of that Committee, to propose to you [that] your Press be immediately brought here & sett up, that the expence of Bringing the Press shall be defrayed by Congress, that you shall be employ'd in publishing for Congress, and paid a liberal price for so doing. The Committee hope this will be a sufficient inducement, when you consider that a Newspaper publish'd by you here, containing Congress intelligence, will be of extensive sale and very profitable. At all events, you will be pleased to give me an immediate answer, and deliver your Letter to General Mifflin, or the Quarter Master who may be in Reading, in order that an express may bring it without delay to this place.<sup>2</sup> I am Gentlemen Your Most Obedient Servant,

Richard Henry Lee

Tr (ViU).

<sup>1</sup> This date was assigned because it was on October 17 that Congress authorized the committee "to take the most speedy and effectual measures for getting a printing press erected in this town." *JCC*, 9:817.

<sup>2</sup> The committee's proposal was apparently accepted for the Philadelphia printers David and William Hall and William Sellers published the *Pennsylvania Gazette* in York, Pa., from December 20, 1777, until June 20, 1778.

## John Hancock to Certain States

Gentlemen,

York Town Pennsylv. October 17th. 1777.

I have the Honour to transmit a Copy of the Return to Congress from Genl. Washington of those Articles of Cloathing that are absolutely necessary for the Army under his immediate Command, accompanied with an Extract of the Genl's Letter on the Subject. From this last you will percieve that the Troops are in the greatest Distress, and likely to suffer still more from the Inclemency of the approaching Season unless they are relieved in Time. I am therefore in Obedience to the enclosed Order of Congress earnestly to request you will forward to Head Quarters, with all possible Dispatch, all such Articles mentioned in the Return, as you can collect, and which are not immediately wanted for those Regiments that have not yet joined the Army. You will also be pleased to issue Orders to the officers of the Cloathiers Department who reside in your State to exert themselves to forward the Cloathing agreeably to the enclosed Requisition of Congress.<sup>1</sup> I must also entreat your attention to the sevl. other Resolves herewith transmitted.<sup>2</sup> I have the Honour to be, Gentlemen, your most obed. & very hble Serv.

J.H. Presid.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A). Addressed to the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia.

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:809; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:364–68.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps the resolves of this date for encouraging recruits and apprehending deserters. *JCC*, 9:813–15.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir, York Town: Pennsylvania October 17th. 1777.

I do myself the Honour to forward the enclosed Resolves in Obedience to the Commands of Congress, and shall only refer your Attention to them.<sup>1</sup>

I congratulate you on the Success of our Arms in the Northern Department. Lest you should not have received an Account of the Particulars from Genl. Gates, I do myself the Pleasure to forward you a Copy of his Letter to Congress together with the Inclosures.<sup>2</sup> From the Character and Rank of the Prisoners, I am in Hopes the Victory is compleat, and that it will be the Means of giving a decisive Turn henceforth to our Affairs in that Quarter.

With every Wish in your Favour, and with Sentiments of perfect Esteem & Respect, I have the Honour to be, Sir, Your most obed. & very hble Servt.  
John Hancock Presid

[P.S.] I have this moment Rec'd your favr. of 16th which I shall lay before Congress on Monday.<sup>3</sup>

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush, with signature and postscript by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> These were resolves of this date on Philadelphia's defense, army recruits and deserters, and postal service. *JCC*, 9:813–17.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. Horatio Gates' October 12 letter to Hancock and enclosures which described his victory over Burgoyne at Bemis Heights on October 7 are in PCC, item 154, 1:272–77.

<sup>3</sup> This letter is in PCC, item 152, 5:119–20, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:381–83.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir, York Town October 17th. 1777

It is now above Two years since I have had the Honour of Presiding in Congress, and I should Esteem myself happy to have it in my Power to render further Service to my Country in that Department; but the decline of Health occasion'd by so long & unremitting an Application to the Duties of my Office both in Congress and out of Congress, join'd to the Scituation of my own private Affairs, have at length taught me to think of Retiring for two or three Months, & I have Determin'd to take my Leave the ensuing week, & set out immediately for Boston after this Express returns.



As the Congress will doubtless proceed to appoint a Successor in my stead, on him therefore will devolve the Business of the Chair. It will fall within the Line of his Duty to keep up that Connection & Correspondence with you which has heretofore been mine, & I sincerely hope he may do it, as well as discharge every other Duty incident to the Office, with more advantage than I have done. Upon the Review however of the Intercourse that has Subsisted between us, I cannot avoid saying, that I feel a great Degree of pleasure in having to the utmost of my power endeavour'd to Execute the Business committed to my Care, and in a particular manner with regard to the Army under your Command, I flatter myself my Conduct in this instance will meet with your Approbation. The Politeness and Attention I have ever experienc'd from you in the Course of our Correspondence will always be a Source of the most pleasing Satisfaction to me.

As it is probable I shall meet with some difficulty in crossing the North River, & shall run a considerable Risque in passing thro' some Tory Towns on the East Side, I must Ask the favour of you to give me Authority to order a few Light Horse from thence to Escort me through that part of the Country. I apprehend I may safely go from hence to North River, tho' I should be happy in having your Opinion & as to the best Rout.<sup>1</sup>

On my Arrival in Boston I shall think myself happy to be favour'd with any Commands from you, and should anything of a publick Nature occur, I will do myself the honour of letting you hear from me.

With the most sincere wishes that you may soon triumph over the Enemies of America, and meet with every public & private Prosperity, & with the utmost Respect, I am, Sir, Your most Obedt. Servt.

John Hancock

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup>In his October 22 reply to this letter, Washington promised to provide Hancock with the escort he requested. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:413-14. Hancock left York at the end of October and met Francis Dana and William Ellery as he was passing through New York on November 7. Ellery wrote an amusing account of this encounter in his diary for that date:

"In our way to the Ferry we met President Hancock in a Sulkey, escorted by one of his Secy's and two or three other Gentlemen, and one Light-horseman. This Escort surprised us as it seemed inadequate to the Purpose either of Defence or Parade. But our Surprise was not of long Continuance, for we had not rode far before we met six or eight Light-horsemen on the Cantor and just as we reached the Ferry, a Boat arrived with as many more. These with the Light-horsemen and the Gentlemen before mentioned made up the Escort of Mr. President Hancock. Who would not be a great Man? I verily believe that the President, as he passes through the Country thus escorted, feels a more triumphant Satisfaction than the Col. of the Queen's Light Dragoons attended by his whole Army and an Escort of a thousand Militia." "Diary of the Hon. William Ellery of Rhode Island, October 20 to November 15, 1777," *PMHB* 11 (October 1887): 323. Ellery's diary covers only the period of his journey to Congress.

## Henry Laurens to William Brisbane

Dear Sir

York 17th October 1777

Since I wrote to you on the 14th August last, your favour of the 29th July has honoured me & requires my thanks for your kind attention to my distressed affairs at Wrights Savanna. The circumstance of March's temerity had been transmitted & my answer Sent to Coll Gervais Some time before the receipt of your Letter. It is impossible for me to give with precision & therefore I will not attempt any directions relative to the plantation above mentioned. I know you & my other friends will act for me as you would for yourselves, I shall therefore only remark that it will be necessary if Doctor Cuffee Should again come to that Plantation to exercise great Severity upon him & also upon Montezuma. Cuffee has been tr[e]ading in the Steps of his Mother who had long been the bane of my Negro families before She had corrupted & ruined March who before his connexion with her had been an honest orderly fellow. Severity or Seperation is therefore necessary, the former may reduce & reform, but I prefer the latter, if he shall make another elopement & come within your reach I intreat you to cause him to be Sent in Irons to Mr. Gervais whom I will authorize to Sell him. The removal of Such leaven may stop a contagion & when he is seperated from his Mother & other corrupters he may make, as he is very able, an excellent Servant. The Same also with respect to Zuma. I beg you will charge Casper not to let them slip through his fingers. I have already requested Mr. Gervais to attempt the Sale of Mary but I would by no means have either of these great transgressors be sold in the neighborhood of any of my Plantations.

I have regularly transmitted to Colonel Gervais the Intelligence from the Scene of War & Chamber of politics which you must have soon been informed of, indeed my time has been generally so fully engaged as not to admit of regularity or exactness in my advices but what I have omitted has been better Supplied by other hands & I have no doubt but you have learned every circumstance of importance which has happened antecedent to the present time.

We have our attention now, to three grand points. General Clinton of the Enemys Army with many Ships of War & about 5000 Men had penetrated Hudsons River so high as to take Fort Montgomery in which we had a Garrison of about 600 Men. Govr. Clinton of New York commanded & had the aid of his Brother Brigadier James Clinton, the latter was wounded badly in the thigh but with his Brother the Governor & about 350 of the Garrison after having bravely three times repulsed & killed many of the Enemy found means to make their escape. Our loss of that important pass arose from the desperate Situation of Burgoyne which had induced the British General Clinton to make as desperate an attempt to distract

our Arms in the Northern department & to form a junction or secure the retreat of that eminent manufacturer of Proclamations, & in order to effect this, tis highly probable New York has been Stripped of Troops & might have been taken by a very small body of spirited Troops if we had had such to Spare for the purpose. However I trust all will end to our advantage. We learn that Burgoyne was totally defeated about the 7th Inst. the day after Clinton had conquered Fort Montgomery, that General Gates's Army was in full pursuit of such as he had not been killed<sup>1</sup> or Captured & we expect every hour an Account of particulars from the General, in consequence of this happy event it will be easy not only to reinforce General Putnam at the passes about Peek's Kill but to bring the Enemy Clinton between two fires & to leave him no alternative but to fight under the greatest disadvantages or to get on board his Ships again & return to New York, content with having destroyed our Forts & two Frigates; losses which altho' very heavy to us are more easily repaired than the loss of Burgoyne's whole Army—to say nothing of the loss of his pompous Character for Generalship. Should events in the two circumstances above mentioned prove as favourable as I modestly expect, we shall then for our Winter's amusement have little to do but with General Howe whose Situation in & about Philadelphia I can assure you from good authority is already very uneasy to him. The purchase even if he should succeed & keep footing would be counted very dear. Depend upon it in the Actions of Brandywine & German Town their Loss does not amount to less than 3000 Men to which may be added at least another Thousand by Sickness, desertion & Capture. Many considerable, & to them valuable Officers, are included in the Loss. The British fleet have pushed hard to get up the Delaware. As hardly has the brave Commodore Hazelwood under amazing discouragements by desertions from his fleet, pushed them back again. What will be the issue God knows but unless the British fleet can come up to the City General Howe's Situation must be extremely hazardous as well as uneasy. If that fleet Succeeds & gets to the City our loss in shipping will be amazingly great, but their Army must nevertheless soon quit the Shore & March down by Water, the fleet will be so far beneficial to them but they dare not trust them in the River above a Month longer.

The present moment is big with events. When these come forth you shall be farther informed as fully as time will permit. &c.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Thus in LB.



## Board of War to George Washington

Sir

War Office Octr. 18th 1777

I have the Honour to enclose all the Accounts we have in the Office of the State of Arms & military Stores. Lead is the most wanting & the Board have applied to Maryland & Virginia for an immediate Loan which it is hoped will be complied with as both these States have a considerable private Stock of this Article.<sup>1</sup> Chiswells Mines are at work on public Account & the Works are in but indifferent Repair. Govr. Henry is of Opinion that Considerable Supplies may be Drawn from thence. The Estimate is made only to the 11th of August as very little Additions have since been made of which authentic Intelligence has been received. Col. Flower can inform what Part of the Lead deposited in Pennsylvania has been consumed & what is become of the Lead which composed the Spouts taken out of Philadelphia. The Lead said in the Estimate to be at Baltimore was sent to Carlisle. I have also enclosed an Abstract of Arms & delivered out at Philadelphia *only* which compared with the present Wants of the Army affords a disagreeable Picture of the Inattention to Economy among the Soldiers &, it is to be feared, too many of the Officers. A few Pairs of Shoes have been collected & sent from this Place but all the Supplies from hence will be inadequate to the Demand. Perhaps 12,00<sup>2</sup> Pair will be the utmost of the Collection this Way. The Board have sent to the Government of this State a Plan for siezing Blanketts, Shoes & Stockings from the dissaffected in Chester County & other Parts of the State which they are desired to communicate to your Excellency & request your Cooperation therein. With what Vigour & Dispatch this Plan will be executed by the Council is yet to be determined,<sup>3</sup> but certain it is the speediest Exertions are indispensibly necessary or Consequences of an alarming Nature must follow. Col. Flower as soon as his Place of Residence is known will be written to on the proposed Amendment in the Cartouch Boxes. Would not a Piece of painted Canvass answer the Purpose of lining the Flaps so as to guard against Rain? Leather is extremely scarce & indeed hardly to be procured at any Rate. I should imagine that much Leather might be saved in Cartouch Boxes if only the Front & the Flaps were made of that Article nailed on the Wood which might be blackened & made to look very well. I am told many of the British Cartouch Boxes are made in this Way.

I have it in Direction to request a General Return of the Army with which Congress have not been favored for some Time past.<sup>4</sup>

I have the Honour to be, with the greatest Respect, Your very obedt Servt,

Richard Peters Secy

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> In the board's October 24 letter to Washington, Peters reported that "about



three Tons of Lead have arrived from Maryland & large Supplies it is hoped are coming on from the Southward." Washington Papers, DLC.

<sup>2</sup> Thus in manuscript.

<sup>3</sup> This plan has not been found, but for the steps taken by the Pennsylvania Council of Safety to seize the supplies needed for the army, see *Pa. Council Minutes*, 11:328-30.

<sup>4</sup> For Washington's October 22 reply, in which he explained why returns had not been made regularly, see Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:414-16.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris

Honourable Gentlemen

York Town Octr 18th. 1777

We have the pleasure of inclosing to you the copy of a letter from General Gates containing the circumstances of a Victory gained over General Burgoyne on the 7th.<sup>1</sup> This event must defeat the main view of General Clinton in proceeding up Hudsons River. He has, it is true, got possession of Fort Montgomery, but with much Loss, as we hear. Though the enemy may boast at this acquisition yet we are persuaded the consequences will be little profitable to them, as Governour Clinton of New York & his Brother Genl. James Clinton are acting vigorously in concert with Genl. Putnam who commands in that Quarter.

Our army under General Washington is numerous & in good Spirits, while General Howe is busied in forming obstructions in the roads leading to the City of Philadelphia by which he supports his hopes of keeping our troops from routing him out of his stolen Quarters.

The enclosed Resolves <sup>2</sup> need no comment from us, being sufficient of themselves to determine your conduct in the points to which they relate.

It is with concern we find that British property has lately been covered in French bottoms; which practice pursued, and American Search disliked by France, it is obvious that the most vulnerable part of Great Britain—her Commerce—will be secured against us, and that by the intervention of our professed friends. We desire therefore, Gentlemen, that you will confer with the Ministers of France on this subject, and satisfy them of the propriety and even necessity which there is that either this commerce should be prohibited, or that the United States be [at] liberty to search into & make distinction between the bottom and the enemy's property conveyed in that bottom.

To prevent ill impressions being made by a number of Officers who are returning to France we think it proper to observe that, without totally deranging & endangering even the annihilation of the American Armies, it was not possible to provide for many of those

Gentlemen in the manner they wished, and which indeed some of them had stipulated for previous to their leaving France. We have done<sup>3</sup> all in our power to prevent discontent; but no doubt there will be some whose dissatisfaction will produce complaints & perhaps misrepresentations. You will be guarded on this head, and represent our conduct as founded solely on the necessity of our situation.

We are, Gentlemen, With much Regard, your very humble Servts,

Richard Henry Lee      James Lovell

Thos. Heyward Junr.      Jno Witherspoon

RC (PPAmP). RC (PHC). Written by Lovell and signed by Lovell, Lee, Heyward, and Witherspoon. Endorsed by Arthur Lee: "Recd. Augt. 8th. 1778 from Monsr. Tessier, Amsterdam."

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Horatio Gates' October 12 letter was read in Congress this day. *JCC*, 9:820.

<sup>2</sup> These resolves have not been identified.

<sup>3</sup> Remainder of letter and signatures taken from the RC fragment at PHC.

## John Hancock to Dorothy Hancock

My Dear Dolly,

York Town October 18th. 1777.

I am now at this Date, & not a Line from you, nor a single word have I heard from you since your Letter by Dodd immediately upon your arrival at Worcester, which you may Judge affects me not a little but I must Submit, & will only Say that I expected oftner to have been the object of your attention.

This is my Sixth Letter to you,<sup>1</sup> the former ones I hope you have Rec'd, by the Completion of those Letters you will, I dare say, be apprehensive that my stay here was nearly Determin'd for the winter, & that I had thoughts of Soliciting your Return to me, my thoughts on that Subject were for a Season serious, but various reasons have occur'd to induce me to Alter my Resolutions, and I am now to inform you that I have come to a fix'd Determination to Return to Boston for a short time, & I have notified Congress in form of my Intentions.<sup>2</sup> You will therefore please immediately on Receipt of this to Tell Mr. Sprigs to prepare the Light Carriage & Four Horses & himself to be ready to proceed on to Hartford or Fairfield, as I shall hereafter direct to meet me on the Road, if my old Black Horses are not able to perform the Journey he must hire Two; The particular time of my Setting out & when I would have Sprigs come forward you shall know by Dodd the Express who I shall Dispatch tomorrow morning; my present Intention is to leave Congress in eight Days, but more particulars in my next.

I shall hope & must Desire that you will Take a Seat in the Carriage, & meet me on the Road, which will much advance your health, & you may be assur'd will be highly Satisfactory to me, & I have

Desir'd Mr Bant to Accompany you in the Carriage, & when we meet he can take my Sulkey, & I return with you in the Carriage to Town. Mr Bant must hire or borrow a Servant to attend you on Horseback, as Harry & Ned are both with me, & Joe is not Suitable. My Dear, I hope your health will admit of your coming with Mr. Bant, I long to See you; I shall Close all my Business in three Days, & indeed have already nearly finish'd, & when once I set out shall travel with great Speed, nothing will prevent my Seeing you Soon, with the leave of providence, but a prevention of passing the North River, I shall push hard to get over, even if I go so far as Albany. I need not Tell you there will be no occasion of *your writing me* after the Receipt of this.

My best wishes attend you for every Good. I have much to Say, which I leave to a Cheerful Evening with you in person. God Bless you, my Dear Dolly, I am, Yours most Affectionately,

John Hancock

MS not found; reprinted from *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 12 (April 1858): 106.

<sup>1</sup> Only Hancock's September 17 and October 1 and 8 letters to Dorothy have been found.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary Thomson's journals do not indicate that Hancock notified Congress of his "Intentions," but for the president's resignation, see Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, October 16, 1777, note 5.

## John Harvie to Thomas Jefferson

Dear Sir

York Sept. [*i.e.*, October] 18th. 1777 <sup>1</sup>

This Morning the Inclosed Interesting Intelligence was received by Congress from General Gates. As I am sure you will receive pleasure in reviewing even the Minutia of this great and Glorious Victory I shall make no Apology for sending you a Copy of the several Letters in the Rough dress you see them haveing made it off in a Hurry at the Clerks Table.<sup>2</sup> Gates's Rapid Successes to the Northward does him honour as a Great and deserving Officer. The British General Clinton some short time since reduced Fort Montgomery on the North River and placed a Strong Garrison in it. However Sanguine Spirits here prophecy his Speedy Evacuation of that post. I wish the Event may Evince the truth of their prediction but as I know nothing of the place I have no Opinion about it. We yet Command the Delaware above Fort Island and the Enemy have been repuls'd with some Damage in every Attempt that they have made on our Batterys and little Navy. The Commodore is a Gallant Officer of whose conduct Congress have expressed their high approbation. The president inform'd me to day that there are a Body of troops in Motion for Wilmington. Probably a few days will bring



us good News from that Hospital. General Washington is within 17 Miles of Philadelphia. His design no doubt is once again to force the British Lines. His troops are Ardent and Spirited therefore we may hope every thing from their Vigour and Activity. Our Agent from Martinique writes that he has every reason to expect an Immediate War in Europe. Pennsylvania is at present a dead weight on us. Their Councils and Executive are puerile weak and Inanimate. They deserve to be D——. I have not patience with them, and Yet they think it Matter of Right to Engroce every Office of trust and profit. I verily think a Majority of them would willingly see us Involv'd in the deepest destruction. However for their Comfort they have Martial Law Suspended over them for 70 Miles around the City. This Resolution pass'd before I came to Congress or I should have had my doubts about the propriety of the Measure.<sup>3</sup> As we have no press from whence you might see those things in print I thought it might partly Ease your Sollicitude to give you this detail of publick Matters.

You'l hear of the Dunmore Militia's behaviour when Order'd to Camp. Pray do not suffer them to Escape Reprehension, or their Example may be fatal to our Militia. They say they could not be provided on the Road. I enquir'd at Frederick town as I came down and their pretence is without any kind of foundation. A well Regulated Militia may be our Salvation and Officers who are not Attentive to their duty ought to be broke like Glass and certain I am the Dunmore Feild Officers were not, two of whom are Delegates for that County. As you wanted your Workmen from Philadelphia you are Sensible they cant now be Engaged from that City. This gives me Uneasiness as there is no man on Earth for whom I would Execute a trust with greater pleasure. I have not yet had a very clear distinct View of Congress but have seen and heard enough to Convince me that it is not that Wise Systematic decent Assembly that you knew it two years ago. If I was with you I could enlarge on this Subject but at a distance Sub Silentio (for fear of Accidents) is the best policy. I fervently hope the next choice of Delegates for our State will be Confind to men of extensive political Knowledge, Steady and Spirited in their Rights with Capacity Sufficient to penetrate the designs of every Corner of the Continent. Rely on it our Confederacy is not founded on Brotherly Love and Able Statesmen are Surely wanting here. To make room for one of this Character I will with pleasure Resign if you Advise me that it will not be Imputed to Unworthy Motives (but that would restrain me if the Service was as bitter as Gall) for to you who know me so well it is Needless to say I do not possess talents for State Affairs and yet truly I am one of the Board of War without having the Skill in Military affairs of an Orderly Sergeant. Our Worthy president withdraws from Congress in about 10 days. Will you be Surprised if F. L. Lee Esqr. Succeeds him? That he will is the General Opinion at present. I wish in a publick



Assembly no Gentleman was fond of high Offices. I have not heard a tittle from my Family since I left it. My wife is certainly Reprehensible for not writeing. Yet perhaps she is Excusable as I never knew her so Negligent before. As she really Merits every tenderness from me, I feel the Strongest Anxiety to hear that she is well. I kn[ow] she cant be happy in my Absence. I am Dr Sir With the Greatest Sincerity Yrs,

Jno. Harvie

RC (DLC). Jefferson, *Papers* (Boyd), 2:34-35.

<sup>1</sup> Harvie undoubtedly wrote this letter on October 18 because both the October 12 Gates letter that he copied and enclosed and the letter from Martinique agent William Bingham that he mentioned were read in Congress that day. *JCC*, 9:820-21.

<sup>2</sup> Harvie's colleague Richard Henry Lee sent copies of Gates' October 12 letter and the enclosures to Washington with these comments: "I had lately the pleasure of seeing my Brother inclose You our first Acct. of G. Gates second Victory over Burgoyne. Herewith I send your brave Commanders our Accts of the Affair, together with an entertaining Correspondence between the two Generals. I think our Officer outwrites as well as outfights his Adversary." Washington Papers, DLC. Although dated "Oct. 28th. 1777" in the contemporary transcription, Lee probably wrote this note shortly after Gates' intelligence arrived on the 17th and certainly before he wrote to Washington on the 20th.

<sup>3</sup> Harvie was probably referring to the resolve empowering Washington to try by court-martial any inhabitants apprehended within 30 miles of enemy-held towns on suspicion of aiding the enemy. This resolve had been approved on October 8, one week before Harvie took his seat on the 15th. See *JCC*, 9:784, 804.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir

York 18th October 1777

I have lately troubled you with many Letters Vizt. 18 September, 5th, 8th, 10th, 12th, 15th Inst. & one of the 9th by Baron de Kalb who is since gone to the Army & I believe one of which I took no minute, all the public Intelligence which at each respective date I could collect accompanied those Letters.

Yesterday I stole a few minutes, & cast a respective glance over your obliging favours of the 4th, 10th, 11th, 16th, & 29th August, 1st & 11th September & Shall profit by one hour to spare before the Meeting of Committee to speak briefly to part of each. Your kindness will excuse & find means to supply deficiencies.

If my memory does not fail me I have already informed you that Grouber was to have been paid only £45—in the whole £10—of which for assisting to conduct the Chariot certainly by Mr. Heath—the remainder by him or me according to my Letters to which I referred. If he has asked a farthing more than £45 he is dishonest.

You will have learned before this can reach you the event of Mr. Geo. McKintoshs attendance upon Congress.<sup>1</sup>

I am very well pleased with your directions concerning the De-

sertion from Mepkin &ca but I am now confirmed that Doctor Cuffee will perpetuate if I keep him the mischief which his Mother has been long practicing among my Negroes. Therefore I request you to sell him, he served five years to the Shoemakers Trade & could & no doubt can now make a very good Shoe, he is a good water Man, a Sawyer & has abilities for every kind of Plantation work but let him not be Sold to live near my other Plantations, you will See this is going a Step further than I had intimated to Mr. Brisbane—& let Zuma follow him immediately to Sale if he once more elopes or comits any capital fault.

I will say nothing about public faith & public Credit in observation upon the intended Lottery, save this—Congress finding the Tickets had not sold equal to their expectations had given orders sometime before the evacuation of Philadelphia for drawing, but that circumstance is & must for a time continue to be a farther obstruction.<sup>2</sup> If you were by this Fire Side where I most devoutly wish you were for an hour, we could enter upon the Subject of public faith & public Credit. The knowledge I have obtained of both has carried my Ideas to such lengths & depths as tire & overwhelm me. I stand in need of an honest, sensible, diligent freind to back & support me, there are Men here who see as deeply as I pretend to do, but they content themselves with seeing, or with barely saying they see, & wish somebody else would take the trouble of investigating facts. Such as I have too often experienced, there are in the world, Men who though honest in their own transactions, will suffer the public stock to be squandered, misapplied, embezzled rather than lose appearances by a Manly opposition against certain characters but I will take up no more of your time on this painful topic.

My Ideas upon the Continental Certificates if I do not misunderstand you, exactly coincide with yours.<sup>3</sup>

Capt. Arthurs Appeal is now before the proper tribunal. I am one of the Bench but upon this occasion holding my duty to be to support the Cause of the State which I have the honour to Represent as far as Justice will accompany me, I desired & obtained leave to act on the part of the Appeler & not as Judge. An opinion will probably be delivered about three days hence; according to my present Insight, the Decree will be confirmed. A very candid sensible Man has said he was surprized the Judge had not committed the proctor for the Indecency & Insolence of certain terms & phrases in the Appeal.<sup>4</sup>

The detention of your Packets & Letters at the House in Charles Town does not at all surprize me, tis the effect of a very groundless jealousy which has made its appearance very visibly in this quarter also—pity & contempt attend them.

My poor old Stepay, I wish we may meet again & that in the meantime Loveday may not suffer my Garden to go to wreck, indeed I have a right to expect & do expect he will improve it considerably.

Colonel Tarlon lately took the trouble of a pair of Flax Hackles to be delivered in his way to Charles Town at Mepkin, he intended going that way & to call at Cumingtee. The Chief Justice's reply to the Georgia Proclamation will please himself as little upon a review as it has pleased his readers in this part of America at first Sight.<sup>5</sup>

Your Assembly made a Short Session but surely long enough to have nominated two or more Delegates in the room of the Gentlemen now retiring. This my Dear freind is an important concern, let me intreat you bring it upon the tapis the very first day of your next meeting, & if possible obtain leave for my return & come yourself. But for God's sake for our Country's sake send men of diligence as well as understanding. You will send none whose Integrity is doubtful.

The Prizes which have been carried into your port have<sup>6</sup>

20th October [1777]

I have been an hundred times taken off, I can say no more at present but to congratulate with you & all the friends of America on the amazing events which have lately happened & which you will read in papers here inclosed. Illuminate your Houses—illuminate your Hearts with gratitude to God & do good to your fellow Creatures—illuminate your Heads & prepare your Selves to meet the Enemy at your own doors & to repel them. By a Note which you will see I had put at the foot of one of the inclosed papers I did expect Burgoyne in his Strong Camp had nothing to eat. Hunger is as powerful as Lead. Adieu my dear friend.

P.S. I wrote to Mr. Brisbane & to Casper before I left Chas. Town to give Mr.           a Barrel of Rice which was what he requested for his S[t]aying at Wright Savanna. My Copy Book of Plantation Letters will shew by whom the Letter was sent.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the case of George McIntosh, who had been accused of illegally trading with the British in East Florida, see John Hancock to Archibald Bulloch, January 8, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> See the August 6 and October 6 resolves on the Continental lottery in *JCC*, 8:619, 9:775.

<sup>3</sup> Gervais had explained his opposition to the use of Continental loan office certificates as a medium of exchange in an August 2 letter to Laurens that is printed in *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 66 (January 1965): 19-21.

<sup>4</sup> On September 12 Congress had referred the case of *Weyman v. Arthur*—an appeal by Capt. George Arthur of a decree of the South Carolina admiralty court—to the Committee on Appeals, but the committee, which reversed the state court's decree, did not render its decision until August 7, 1778. See *ibid.*, p. 21; and *JCC*, 8:738. The legal records pertaining to this case are in Records of the Supreme Court of the United States, Record Group 267, case no. 24. For a study of the subject of prize courts and law during the revolutionary era, see Henry J. Bourguignon, *The First Federal Court: The Federal Appellate Prize Court of the*

*American Revolution, 1775–1787*, Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society 122 (1977).

<sup>5</sup>For further references to the controversy over Chief Justice William Henry Drayton's role in an abortive plan to annex Georgia to South Carolina, see Laurens to Gervais, September 5, 1777, note 3.

<sup>6</sup>Thus in the LB.

## John Adams to John Hancock

Sunday Morning 19th Oct. 1777

Mr John Adams presents his respectfull Compliments to Mr President Hancock, and asks the Favour of him to recollect the Words used by Mr Adams concerning Mr Duane in the Debate of last Thursday Evening, and to put them down in Writing, as Mr. Adams is very desirous of knowing the true Import of them, as they Struck other Gentlemen.<sup>1</sup>

RC (CtY).

<sup>1</sup>No other information has been found on "the Debate of last Thursday Evening," and whether Hancock complied with Adams' request is not known. According to the journals, Congress spent the evening of October 16, 1777, considering "the report of the committee on departments relative to the war office." *JCC*, 9:809–11.

## John Hancock to the New Hampshire Assembly

Gentn.

York Town 19 Octr. 1777

I am so press'd with Business that I have only Time to Cover you Sundry Resolves of Congress to which I beg to Refer your attention. The Judgment of the Court Martial respectg General Sullivan I beg you will order to have printed in your News papers.<sup>1</sup>

I am, Gentn, Your very hume servt.

John Hancock Presidt

RC (McHi).

<sup>1</sup>For further information about Gen. John Sullivan's acquittal of charges of negligence during an August 22 raid on Staten Island, see Hancock to Washington, September 3, note 2, and September 14 (2d letter), 1777, note 2. Hancock, who wrote the present letter on a Sunday, obviously knew beforehand that Congress planned to endorse the verdict of Sullivan's court-martial because not until October 20 did the delegates officially declare that the result of the court-martial was "highly pleasing to Congress" and call for its publication "in justification of the injured character of that officer." *JCC*, 9:822–23. Congress apparently did not transmit a copy of this resolve to Sullivan until Henry Laurens, who succeeded President Hancock on November 1, wrote to the general on November 4.



## John Hancock to William Palfrey

Dear Palfrey

York 19 Octor. 1777

I have only Time to bid you Farewell; immediately on Return of this Express I shall set out for Boston, I have notified Congress in form; & have by this Express Taken my Leave of the General for two or three months.<sup>1</sup> I am wore down, however I have a Consciousness of not having been Negligent, but as far as my small Abilities enabled me, have Executed the Business of Congress with Dispatch & Fidelity, thus much I may Say, & Add that the prospect of Gain did not influence me; I have Expended my own Money & in that Case had a Right to drink wine if I pleas'd. I have order'd my Carriage & four horses to meet me at Hartford, & have desir'd Mrs Hancock to Take a Seat in it. Will you not Send me a Line for Mrs. Palfrey, I shall See her. Give me a Line by Return of this Express. God Bless you & believe me, your Real Friend,

John Hancock

RC (MH-H).

<sup>1</sup> For further information on Hancock's resignation, see Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, October 16, 1777, note 5.

## Henry Laurens to John Rutledge

Dear Sir

York 19th October 1777

I had the honour of writing to Your Excellency the 16th by the hands of Mr. G.A. Hall an abstract of which shall be Subjoined & inclosed a duplicate of the Resolve therein referred to thus doubled from an opinion that the bearer hereof will reach Charles Town 2 or 3 days earlier than Mr. Hall & in order that not an hour may be lost in a matter which Congress is pleased to declare to be of great Importance. Besides the Resolve above mentioned Your Excellency will receive with this Seven more<sup>1</sup> which the President has desired me to forward upon my application to him for blank Commissions for Privateers, of these the President intimates he can at present Supply only fifteen, when they come the exact number shall be mentioned.

The Board of War have entered into Resolves by which 'tis intended to take General Howe out of the Brigadiers List & to call him to General Washington's head Quarters. This arrangement will probably afford Satisfaction to the General & at the Same time remove from our State a bone of contention, every body here as far as I have been able to learn are Surprized his Command in South Carolina has given offence to any one.<sup>2</sup> In the Same paper Your Excellency will See that Mr. Massey is recommended for Dep. Muster Master General for South Carolina & Georgia. The Resolves are to be reported to

Congress to morrow & I have no doubt of their being confirmed without debate.<sup>3</sup>

When we had retired from the War Office yesterday I requested of my Colleagues a public Letter might be prepared for Your Excellency but as I hear nothing further I take for granted that Mr. Middletons hurry to get away to morrow & Mr. Heywards engagement with the Committee of Intelligence have been bars to my wishes. I shall therefore transmit to Your Excellency duplicates of Letters received the 17th Inst. from General Gates with additions of such articles as have come to my knowledge & their authorities.

The welfare of South Carolina is ever a Subject of your Excellency's attention & Study, therefore without an apology, I intreat Your Excellency to consider how essential it will be in order to promote that great end to urge the House of Assembly without further delay to complete the number of our Representation in Congress, if I apprehended no other cause of Complaint but merely that of the burthen of business which will lie on me in a few days when Mr. Heyward shall also have retired I would be Silent, but as a Citizen I have a right to complain of the insufficiency which that event will occasion in our Representation & if it Should be continued to blame those for neglect of Duty whom the public have intrusted with the Guardianship of their Estates & Liberties.

The Committee of Appeals will meet to morrow & probably determine on the Case of the Brigantine Success.<sup>4</sup> I have withdrawn by permission in this Instance from the Bench preferring to act as a Delegate for the State in which that Vessel was Condemned. If this Subject is mentioned in my last your Excellency will excuse the repetition, I had not time to Copy & my memory is very far from being always a Sure record.

I have the honour to be with perfect Esteem & regard

[P.S.] In a Seperate packet Your Excellency will receive the Resolves abovementioned & also 15 Blank Commissions for Private Ships of War, Bonds & Instructions.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not identified.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. Robert Howe of North Carolina, the commander of the southern military department, was engaged in a bitter dispute with Gen. Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina, who denied Howe's right to that command. Congress promoted Howe to major general on October 20, but at the same time Laurens suddenly dropped his support for the proposal to post Howe to Washington's headquarters and therefore the general remained in command of the southern department. See *JCC*, 9:823n.2; Laurens to Robert Howe, October 20, 1777; and Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina in the Revolution, 1775-1780* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1901), pp. 304-8.

<sup>3</sup> As Laurens predicted, Congress appointed William Massey to this post on October 20. *JCC*, 9:823.

<sup>4</sup> See Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, October 18, 1777, note 4.

## Richard Henry Lee to George Wythe

Dear Sir

York in Pennsylv. Octr. 19, 1777

I have once before, since our session here, given you an account of the progress of war in these parts and further North, but the irregularity of the Post gives reason to doubt whether you have received my letter.<sup>1</sup> The boasting Burgoyne having been beaten in two pitched battles is on his return, with his shattered army, but whether he will be able to get back or not, time must discover. The want of a Press here obliges us to furnish manuscript accounts of military events, and this is attended with great difficulty amidst the pressure of much business. You will for this reason excuse my referring you to the inclosures sent Mr. President Page,<sup>2</sup> for a full account of the last action with Gen. Burgoyne & an entertaining correspondence between him & Gates subsequent to the battle. Danger appears now to be thickening about Gen. Howe, so that I hope to be able e'er long to give you favorable accounts from the neighborhood of Philadelphia.

Permit me now Sir to trespass a little on your time and friendship with my private concerns. I am sure to be indulged by the latter and therefore more confidently complain of the malicious perseverance of my enemies, who, I am informed, propose to bring my letter to Mr. Scot before the approaching session of Assembly.<sup>3</sup> It is really difficult to say whether the folly or the malice of these people is greatest, but it is certainly very insultive & degrading to the Great Council of the Commonwealth, to make it a Court of Scandal, and a Vehicle for conveying Slander against the reputation of innocent men; when the great and important affairs of Defence, Finance, and Courts of Justice, call so loudly for quick and wise determination. Let the date of my letter to Scott be attended to, the State of paper money at the time, the reasons and principles upon which my proposal was founded, and my conduct will appear not only innocent but laudable. For it is certainly praiseworthy to prevent ones family from ruin by means that are just and fair.

*(If by a proper reflection upon Men and things, It was clear to me that my rents established under different laws, from the present, and upon principles that then appeared proper and permanent, would most probably, by the change that was working in our political system, be rendered of little value, where was the harm in proposing a change, by which I might be saved from ruin, and the Tenant not injured? Nor could this have operation upon a currency that then scarcely began to exist and which from its then scarcity was as good as any money whatever. In truth it was so scarce, that my Tenants either could not, or would not get it to pay me my rents, but offered me produce in lieu of money. In fact my plan was rather to affect futurity than the present time, and a bargain made before the existence of the currency could not be intended to injure it.)* The question then is,



was I obliged by law when these contracts were made, to receive any thing like the present currency in discharge of the rent reserved. You Sir will say no. When therefore the exigence of public affairs rendered it necessary to issue such quantities of paper money as to lessen its value some hundred per Cents, and that a law should be made to establish its currency, this being subsequent to, and destructive of private contracts made under the faith of former laws, should not Individuals be saved from the retrospective destruction wrought by the change. And the more especially in instances where this can be done without injury to the other contracting party. For in this case the Tenants produce rises in value in proportion to the superabundance of circulating money. Reasoning upon the probability of the change, and as a good Citizen, willing to procure a just alteration before events took place that might render such an attempt liable to misconstruction, I long since endeavoured to procure that which would only in good faith obtain the original design of both the contracting parties. And this point of reason and justice would long ago have taken place without murmur or noise had it not been for some malicious enemies, Pseudo Patriots, and a few Knavish Tenants, who under the cloak of public spirit have raised this clamor. Perhaps I may be considered as standing in the way of some private views. My wish is only to lend my helping hand to fix the independence of America on wise and permanent foundation, and then with infinite pleasure I will return to my farm and eat the bread of industry in freedom and ease. I have no doubt Sir, but that you will on all proper occasions, as well upon principles of justice to injured character, as on account of the long friendship that has subsisted between us, place this matter in the clear light that your abilities enable you to do. It is long since my letter to Mr. Scott was written, and having mislaid the copy, I do not perfectly remember its contents, but conscious of the purest intentions I am sure that no sentiment can be found therein inconsistent with virtuous patriotism. And after all it will be a ridiculous gratification of private malice for the Assembly to take up the consideration of such an affair as this. I have inclosed you a letter from Colo. Marshall to me on the subject, and one to yourself from me,<sup>4</sup> which I leave to your discretion and friendship to produce to the House or not, if any attempt shd. be made there to my prejudice.

I am, with particular esteem, dear Sir, your affectionate friend and obliged humble servant,

R. H. Lee

FC (PPAmP).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> William Booth, in an October 7 letter which is in Lee, *Letters* (Ballagh), 1:304n., had warned Lee that his enemies planned to resume their attack on him in the assembly. For the outcome of previous accusations made against Lee, see Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry, May 26, 1777, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> Not found. Wythe subsequently reported in a November 6 letter to Lee that



Lee's letter to Scott "concerning the leases was mentioned in the house, but so slighted, and treated in such a manner that I had no occasion to acquaint the house with what you had written to me upon that subject." Lee Papers, PPAmP.

## Cornelius Harnett to Richard Caswell

Dear Sir,

York, Pennsylvania, Oct. 20th. 1777

I have the honor to enclose to your Excellency an account of the Surrender of Genl Burgoyne and his whole army on the 14th Instant, the particulars are not yet come to hand, but this account is so well authenticated, that Genl. Washington on receiving the intelligence ordered 13 Cannon to be fired, and the Bells in this Town rang for hours.<sup>1</sup>

The two armies near Philadelphia were on Friday last within 7 miles of each other, and a General Action is expected daily. Should we be successful in this Quarter, we may pronounce I think with certainty America Free and Independent. Your Excellency will be pleased to excuse my not being more particular at this time. Congress are in high spirits, Enclosed is a Copy of the account received. I am with great respect and regard, your Excellency's most Obedt. huml. Servt.

Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.] No Press here.<sup>2</sup>

Tr (Nc-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> The "account" of General Burgoyne's surrender that Harnett sent to Governor Caswell was slightly premature. On October 15 the Albany Committee wrote a letter to the president of the New York Council of Safety stating that "Last night at 8 O'Clock the Capitulation whereby General Burgoyne and his whole Army surrendered themselves prisoners of War was signed." Governor Clinton of New York sent a copy of this letter to Gen. Israel Putnam, who forwarded it to Washington, who transmitted it to Congress, which received it on Sunday, October 19, but did not officially read it till two days later. Yet contrary to Harnett's report to Caswell, Burgoyne only offered to surrender on October 14, the Saratoga Convention was signed on the 16th, and Burgoyne's surrender actually took place on the 17th. As Congress did not receive official confirmation of these events from General Gates until October 31, the delayed delivery of Gates' dispatches became a temporary source of great uneasiness to a number of delegates. See *JCC*, 9:824-25, 851; *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 5:676; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:392; and John Adams to Abigail Adams, October 24, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Harnett also wrote the following brief letter to William Wilkinson this day. "Mr. Middleton is the bearer of this, one of the Delegates for South Carolina. I hope You and my Other friends in Wilmington will shew him & his family every Civility in Your power, he is a Gentleman of Integrity & worth.

"I congratulate you on the Glorious News inclosed. This Moment recd. yours of the 19 Ultimo which I shall answer fully by next Oppertunity but must refer you to Mr. Middleton for News. Be not uneasy, Jackey is very well." Emmet Collection, NN.

## Henry Laurens to Robert Howe

Dear General

York 20th October 1777.

Your favour of the 28th August reached me the very Evening of the peoples's flight from Philadelphia. I fled not. Having foreseen from amazing remissness where there ought to have been the utmost attention & vigilance I had sent forward my Baggage, followed it that Evening & next Morning after many thousands had passed by me I made my breakfast, filled my Pipe & soberly entered my Carriage, drove gently on to Bristol, took in the wounded Marquis delafayette & proceeded to Bethlehem, thence to Reading & Lancaster. Here Congress were soon convened but hearts were still fluttering in some bosoms & a motion made for adjourning to this Town. We have been here about twenty days. Within this time frequent opportunities have offered but I chose to defer paying my respects to you till I could say something to the purpose & fortune has now thrown much in my way. I refer you to the papers which will accompany this.

As I have no doubt the report of the Board of War will be this Morning confirmed I will take it for granted, & with great pleasure congratulate with you on your promotion. The removal I hope will rather afford you Satisfaction, it will place you in a more honourable Sphere & withdraw a Subject for contention by a people some of whom of both parties I am persuaded you Love & esteem & I perceive those good people were dividing fast. The motion the Notice I mean for an intended Motion in the Assembly at their next meeting is now barred & a great deal of ill grounded debate Strangled. I will say nothing further on the Subject but to tell you that I am happy in this event in which my endeavours & wishes are crowned with Success. Let not my happiness be abated by learning that you are not perfectly Satisfied. Rank has been hitherto Strangely conducted & occasion for complaint given to Some brave Officers. These however have in general Submitted to the Resolves of Congress & there have been but few instances of Resignation; hereafter we may expect more accuracy & regularity in Army arrangements from an establishment of a new Board of War.<sup>1</sup>

I congratulate with you also on the News from Saratoga. This Intelligence will make your generous Soldierly heart bound with joy surpassing every feeling from circumstances confined to your Self. While General Howe keeps near his Canoes we can entertain no well grounded hopes of adding a Knight of the Bath to our list of prisoners but upon my honour if Hazlewood perseveres in his manly opposition to the fleet & that our Fort Mifflin & Cheveau de frise are sustained a few days longer such an event will begin to be possible. Already his Situation is rendered very painful to him & as General Washington has again approached within ten Miles of his Camp we may expect every hour to hear of another action. His vicinity however keeps the

Enemy from Sending detachments to act in aid of the shipping. General Potter as we are just now informed in his late March towards Chester intercepted a brigade of Baggage Waggon, took the whole Guard prisoners & among other articles four or five Brass field peices & upwards of three hundred & fifty New Tents.

I am writing in Congress. This moment came to hand a Letter from General Washington inclosing a very long, apologetic, expostulatory, Censorious, Rascally epistle from the Ir-Revd. Jacob Duche. Take what follows from Memory.<sup>2</sup>

He apologizes for his connexion with the freinds of America & with Congress as their Chaplain in language which confirms the opinion I have for Six Years past entertained of him—vain glorious insincere Man—in my estimation the worst Character in the world.

He expostulates with the General on the danger to which America is now exposed of total ruin, marks in Striking terms the State of our Army (as it appeared to him in low Spirits a few days ago), our Navy, our finances, our weak dependence upon France who have been from the beginning & who now are duping & leading us to our destruction & who mean never to afford us any effectual aid particularly never to consent to the establishment of American Independency. Under these heads he expostulates with the General to reflect upon his own situation, depicts the present Congress in terms unjustly very dishonorable to several States & contrasts to it the Characters of Some of its original Members who Says he, were the Men in whose Service you entered & not the present Set. Here is Jesuitism indeed nor is he less bitter against the Officers in the Army. He is Severe upon those Members of Congress who were Sent to treat with Lord & General Howe last year, charging them with insurity, insincerity & inconsistency—Labours to prevail upon the General to use his influence with Congress to rescind their Resolutions for the Declaration of Independence, to Cease hostilities & finally the Rascally part in the Superlative comes forth—if all arguments Should fail “you have one infallible Resource still left”—“Negotiate for America at the head of your Army.” Need I comment on this infamous performance, can conscience his pretended guide dictate a Sentiment so base? I’ll Send you the whole Letter by & by although tis very long.

To what a low an ebb is Britain reduced when her Ministry are constrained to make use of Such Engines?

Surely this has been calculated as a preparatory Step to purchasing our brave & honest Commander in Chief. When I send you Copy of his Letter I shall couple with it one of his Studied Celebrated prayers for Congress—the contrast will shew the rottenness of the priests Heart.

This moment is reading the Report of the Board of War. If I do not contradict it depend upon it you are Major General. Depend upon it also I am with great esteem & respect.



P.S. I saw good Reasons while the Report was in debate for altering my opinion & therefore combated my own Recommendation to call you from So Carolina.<sup>3</sup> Your promotion & the Resolution of Congress Sent to you by Mr. Middleton will remove all jealousy of your Command. I hope you will approve of this, stay among us, continue to live a Life of temperance & Chastity & acquire greater Glory. The Commanding Officer of So Carolina & Georgia is moving in a Sphere preferable to Major General without a particular Command.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Congress approved regulations for a new board of war to consist of three nondelegates on October 17, and on November 7 it chose Gen. Thomas Mifflin, Col. Robert H. Harrison, and Col. Timothy Pickering as the new board's members. After Harrison declined his appointment, Congress enlarged the new board to five members, and on November 27 selected Gen. Horatio Gates, former Commissary General Joseph Trumbull, and Richard Peters, the old board's secretary, to serve with Mifflin and Pickering. The board was reorganized in this way because the delegates who comprised the old board had found it increasingly difficult to transact Board of War business and also attend to their other congressional duties. See *JCC*, 6:1041-42, 7:241-42, 8:563, 9:818-20, 874, 945-46, 959-60, 971-72.

<sup>2</sup> Washington enclosed the October 8 letter written to him by the Rev. Jacob Duché, Congress' first chaplain, with his October 16 letter to President Hancock. Although Congress was outraged by the Anglican cleric's call for the general to repudiate the Declaration of Independence and open peace negotiations with Great Britain, it decided to take no official notice of his letter. Duché himself left Philadelphia for England in December 1777 and did not return to America again until 1792. See *PCC*, item 152, 5:119-32; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:381-83; and *DAB*. There is a useful compendium of primary sources pertaining to this incident in Worthington C. Ford, ed., *The Washington-Duché Letters* (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1890).

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Laurens to John Rutledge, October 19, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to John Wells

Dear Sir

York 20th October [1777]

The two inclosed papers will furnish you with very important & very good News, but I should Say four papers for I mean to put up a Boston & a New York Gazette in each of which there are Some Interesting advice. Mr. Gervais will let you have Copies of the Letters which passed between General Gates & Burgoyne. As I will Send my rough Copy you will be able to understand it. You will preceive by a Note I made at the bottom I had entertained hopes of the happy event. Your freind General Stevens is highly censured for misconduct the 4 Inst.,<sup>1</sup> Colo. Martin under Arrest & will probably die if things now alleged are proved in a Court.<sup>2</sup> General Howe<sup>3</sup> will shew you a page of Duche's history. Take warning, Speak your Sentiments honestly & having Spoken so be firm, let not Father nor Mother nor Interest nor any consideration induce you to dissemble & temporize.



That Wretch wrote on the 5th Inst. under impressions made on his gloomy Cowardly mind by false Reports of the action of the 4th & as false accounts of foreign affairs, he would not have written in the same Style had he known even the fact of that day much less would he if he had known the fate of Burgoyne. But tis evident to me that General Howe<sup>4</sup> is desirous of treating & wishes to draw an attempt from our Side. Pray with all expedition forward the Saratoga Accounts to another Reverend Rottenheart South of Charles Town. Let us mortify if we cannot amend them.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> On November 17 a court-martial found Gen. Adam Stephen of Virginia guilty of "unofficerlike behaviour, in the retreat from German town" and of having been "frequently intoxicated since in the service, to the prejudice of good order and military discipline." Accordingly, the court sentenced Stephen to be dismissed from service and Washington approved the sentence on November 20, 1777. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:88-89.

<sup>2</sup> On October 13 a court-martial acquitted Col. Alexander Martin of the Second North Carolina Regiment of a charge of cowardice during the battle of Germantown. *Ibid.*, 9:470.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Howe.

<sup>4</sup> William Howe.

## Richard Henry Lee to George Washington

Dear Sir,

York the 20th October 1777

Your favor of the 16th I received yesterday, and was a good deal surprised to find you had been told that Congress had appointed Gen. Conway a Major General.<sup>1</sup> No such appointment has been made, nor do I believe it will, whilst it is likely to produce the evil consequences you suggest. It is very true, that both within and without doors, their have been Advocates for the measure, and it has been affirmed that it would be very agreeable to the army, whose favorite Mr. Conway was asserted to be. My judgement on this business was not formed until I received your letter. I am very sure congress would not take any step that might injure the Army, or even have a tendency that way; and I verily believe they wish to lessen your difficulties by every means in their power, from an entire conviction that the purest motives of public good direct your actions.

The business of a Board of War is so extensive, so important, and demanding such constant attention, that Congress see clearly the necessity of constituting a new Board, out of Congress, whose time shall be entirely devoted to that essential department.<sup>2</sup> It is by some warmly proposed that this board shall be filled by the three following gentlemen, Colo. Read, Colo. Pickering the present Adjutant General, and Colo. Harrison your Secretary. And that Gen. Conway be appointed A.G. in the room of Colo. Pickering. It is my wish, and

I am sure it is so of many others, to know your full and candid sentiments on this subject. For my own part, I cannot be satisfied with giving any opinion on the point until I am favored with your sentiments, which I shall be much obliged to you for Sir as soon as your time will permit. It has been affirmed that Gen. Conway would quit the service if he were not made a M. General. But I have been told, in confidence, that he would leave it at the end of this Campaign if he *was* appointed, unless his word of honor were taken to continue for any fixed time. And it is a question with me whether the Advocates for Gen. Conway will not miss their aim if he should be appointed A. General, unless he has the rank of Maj. General also. My reason for thinking so, is, that I have been informed Gen. Conway desires to retire to his family, provided he can carry from this Country home with him, a rank that will raise him in France. It is very certain that the public good demands a speedy erecting, and judicious filling of the new Board of War; and I sincerely wish it may be done in the most proper manner. I do not imagine Congress would appoint Colo. Harrison without first knowing whether you could spare him, nor do I think that so important an office as that of A.G. should be touched without maturest consideration.

We every moment expect the Express with an account that will enable us to congratulate you on the surrender of Gen. Burgoyne and the remains of his shattered army. This will be one of the Prussian sixes, and I *augur* that the other will soon cast up upon the Delaware.

I am, with sincerest wishes for your health and success, dear Sir your most affectionate and obedient servant,

Richard Henry Lee

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> For Washington's letter to Lee explaining his opposition to the promotion of Thomas Conway, see Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:387-90. In the Richard Varick transcript, the only copy of the letter that has been found, the letter is dated October 17.

Despite Washington's opposition, Conway was eventually appointed inspector general of the Continental Army and promoted to the rank of major general on December 13, 1777—a decision Congress reached even after Conway had submitted a letter of resignation and charged several delegates with unjustified hostility to his pretensions to this rank. The surprisingly brusque letter he sent to York with his letter of resignation—both of which were read in Congress on November 24—contains information on the subject of some of the delegates' initial opposition to him as well as a lengthy review of his claim to rank. "This Day," Conway asserted in the November 14 letter he directed "to Cha. Carroll, or, in his absence, to the secretary of Congress," "I have sent my resignation to congress. Seven Weeks agoe several gentlemen wrote to me from the seat of congress mentioning the very extraordinary Discourses held by you sir, by Mr Lovell, Mr Duher, and some other members on account of my applying for the rank of Major General. If I had hearken'd to well grounded resentment, I should undoubtedly have Left the army instantly. But my Delicacy pointed out to me to continue in the army untill the end of the Campaign." That he was promoted the following month pursuant to a recommendation of the Board of

War suggests both considerable approval of his forthrightness and the persuasiveness of his letter. See *JCC*, 9:958, 1023-26; and, for Conway's September 25 letter requesting promotion and November 14 letter to Carroll, *PCC*, item 159, fols, 453-55, 461-67.

<sup>2</sup> See Henry Laurens to Robert Howe, this date, note 1.

## North Carolina Delegates to Richard Caswell

Sir

Pennsylvania York Octr. 20th 1777

General Washington attacked General Howe's Army the 4th Inst near German Town, the enemy were surprized and gave way in every quarter, we drove them for three hours, and should undoubtedly have obtained a Compleat victory had not two Divisions of our Troops mistaken each other for enemies and retreated, disorder soon took place and it was impossible to rally the men again. General Howe was so alarmed that it is confidantly aserted he had given directions to retreat to Chester, had we not saved him the trouble.

This misfortune was owing to a great Fogg and no air, to carry off the smoke, which prevented a man's seeing fifty yards, our Soldiers behaved with great resolution (& some pushed Bayonets) untill the mistake happened.

General Nash was wounded by a Cannonball early in the engagement & died two days after, his death is greatly to be lamented, he was highly esteemed by all that knew him. Colos Buncomb and Irwin were taken prisoners. We have the pleasure to inform you that those of our Countrymen that were engaged behaved well.

The enemy's loss must have been very considerable, as there were it is said near 300 waggon loads of wounded carried to the Hospitals in Philada. General Howe refused to suffer any of the Inhabitants to walk on the field, untill the dead were taken care of. General Agnew was killed in the action, General Grant we are told died soon after, Kniphauson, & Sir William Erskine were wounded, the reports differ whether they are dead or not. General Washington has been busie in preparing every necessary for another attack, which by letters from some of the officers in his Army we expect will be every hour, and as the spirits of our Soldiers are great, in Consequence of there having discovered that they can make their enemies run, we hope for great things. Should General Howe meet with a defeat he will be ruined as we are still in possession of the river Delaware.

We Congratulate Your Excellency on the great & important success of the Army under the Command of General Gates. The account we had from Colo. Trumble several days ago differed little from Gen Gates's letter, that with others from him & Genl. Burgoyne we inclose for your amusement.



Yesterday we were informed by a letter from the Chairman of the Committee at Albany directed to a Friend of his in New York, that Burgoyne & his whole Army had surrendered themselves prisoners of war, it is generally beleived here, indeed it is nothing more than what we expected as that army had very little provision & were few in number compared to ours.

The Revd. Mr. Duche has acted such a part as will for ever disgrace him, in short he may be said to be the first of Villains, we can not help suspecting that the letter he wrote to our Worthy Genl. must have been dictated by a Howe, the design of the letter was to prevail on the Genl. to negotiate Terms for himself & Army. You know, administration have tried Bribery & Corruption, nothing is too dirty or mean for the British Court & those that are employed against us, however we Trust that the day is not far off when we shall all be free & happy. The confusion the different Clerks have been in for some time with regard to their books &c has prevented our getting a Copy of the account of such sums of money as has been received by direction of our State, we will inclose it as soon as we can possibly get it, to your Excellency.

Doctor Burke left us last week, when he set out for North Carolina. We are with due Respect, Sir, Your obt. Servts.

J Penn

Cornl Harnett

P.S. Mr. Duche remained in Phila. & of course fell into the enemy's hands.

21st. Burgoyne & his whole Army are prisoners. I have seen Govr. Clinton's letter this morning giving an account of the matter. General Howe has run away & recrossed Schuylkill, our Army is in pursuit of the runaways. Our little Fleet has kept the river agt. Lord Howe & all he could do, the Roebuck & another large Ship are rendered unfit for service. The day is ours.

John Penn

RC (NN). Written by Penn and signed by Penn and Harnett.

## Elbridge Gerry to Thomas Gerry

Dear Brother

York Town Octr 21. 1777

My Absence from Philadelphia in July last, upon a Committee to the Camp, prevented an earlier Answer than that wch You received to the Letters mentioned in your Favour of Sepr. 22, containing Matters of Importance; altho I am often under the Necessity of so far yeilding to the pressure of publick Business, as to omit answering the Letters of my most intimate Friends.



The Prices of the Ticklenburg, Twine, & Needles, which You took for the Inhabitants of the Town, cannot be ascertained untill I see Colo Chase; as to him is referred the Settlement of the prices of the other parcells, first intended to have been paid for here. The Russia Duck which You want for your own Use, I will lend, & You will also be pleased to take what is wanted for the True Blue, if she should be again fitted out on our joint Account. I think it adviseable to purchase, rather than sell, notwithstanding her Cruises have not been remarkably successful.

The Risque which You unavoidably took of the other Privateer, without Doubt intitles You to the Share of all her prizes, which You had Advices of, previous to the Receipt of my Letter; after that Time, the Bargain was compleated, & had the Vessel been taken the Loss would have been justly mine, notwithstanding such Capture might have happened some Time before You received my Letter, therefore the share of all prizes, of whose Capture, Advices shall have arrived *after* you received my letter, will by the same principle be mine. I cannot advise You at present to send your Vessel to Virginia, but am in Hopes that the Bay will be much less infested about the latter End of next Month, before which Time You may think it adviseable to pursue the other plan mentioned in your Letter. The Money wch I mentioned before to have been overpaid by Messers Purviances shall be repayed to Mr Cary, whenever he shall have an Oppertunity to adjust the Matter. I have minuted the 50 Dollars wch You recd from Mr Saunders and am sorry to hear that he is no more.

With respect to publick Affairs, I think Providence has of late remarkably favoured our Cause, & to him alone be all the Glory. The News of the Captivity of General Burgoyne with his whole Army, which We have recd from Governor Clinton, is great, & has had such an Effect on General Howe as to induce him to leave German Town, so that my next will I hope be dated at Philadelphia. If the States are vigorous, they may destroy the Residue of the British Army in America before Reinforcements can be sent from Britain, & thus put an End to a most unnatural & inhuman War. I had forgot to mention, that the Enemy suffered greatly (as was imagined from the Accounts collected by Major Clarke from Philadelphia) in the last Action at Germantown; their Loss is supposed to have been at least 1500.<sup>1</sup>

My Love to Mrs Gerry, Brothers, Sisters & Little Friends & believe me to be yours very sincerely,

E Gerry

[P.S.] Their General Agnew is killed & their [. . .] supposed to be mortally wounded.<sup>2</sup>

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Some of the information collected by Maj. John Clark is contained in another document in Gerry's hand located in the Gerry-Knight Collection, MHi. The MS bears the heading: "Intelligence just recd from Major Clark, Aid de Camp to General Green, 4 o'C P.M. Octr 8th 1777."

"The Enemy in the Action of the 4th Instant lost the following officers—General Agnew killed, Colonels Ambercombie, Bird, Waterly, & General D Heisters Son killed, General Knyphausen wounded in the Hand, between two & three hundred Waggon's loaded with wounded Soldiers came into the City before (a quaker who left the City after the Action, & is well known to Major Clark as a Man of Veracity, but desires to have his Name secreted) M—— left it, Several Quakers who were at Yearly (held in the City) Meeting confirms the Above & further say that 2000 Hessians were sent over Schuylkill towards Chester since, probably to secure a retreat. Our loss about 700 chiefly wounded & taken. General Nash dead of his Wounds; Doctor (Member of Congress) Witherspoon's Son killed, two Aids de Camp mortally wounded—White & Sherburns (of Portsmouth) of General Sullivans Family—Colo Hendricks, Stone, & Lewis. Colo. Parker of Virginia wounded, included in the above."

<sup>2</sup> After he sealed this letter, Gerry added the following note to the cover. "Octr 26, 7 oClock P.M. The within Intelligence relative to the Attacks on Fort Mifflin, & the Fort at Red Bank is confirm'd by Letters from General Washington; except that 78 only of the Enemy were killed at the latter, & 72 of the wounded taken prisoner amongst whom were Count Donop & his Brigade Major. 300 Arms were also taken from the Enemy. The two ships that were burnt mounted 60 & 20 Guns.

"According to the Number killed abt 150 of the Enemy's wounded have escaped." For a longer account of the attacks mentioned here, see Gerry to Thomas Gerry, October 26, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir

York 21 Octobr. 1777.

If I should add any thing to the much good News Sent you this Morning by Dorst an Express it would be that General Putnam the 16th confirms the Account of Burgoyne's absolute surrendering as prisoner of War<sup>1</sup>—that our Army are in pursuit of General Howe & that part of our Troops are in actual possession of Philadelphia but this I believe is premature—however it will be so.

Inclosed is Capt Salter's Note for Sixty five Dollars. Receive the money & place to the Credit of yours &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> This day Congress read Gen. Israel Putnam's October 16 letter to President Hancock and an enclosed October 15 letter from Gov. George Clinton of New York, "giving intelligence that at 8 o'clock on the evening of the 14th, a capitulation was signed, whereby General Burgoyne and [his] whole army surrendered themselves prisoners of war." JCC, 9:824-25; and PCC, item 159, fol. 107.

## James Lovell to William Whipple

Dear sir,

York Town Oct 21st 1777

I am to acknowledge the receipt of your two favors of the 22d and 30th of last month delivered two days ago, together, so that you will perceive we have had an interrupted post conveyance—very mortify-

ing to seperated friends. As from the last it appears that you was just getting into a saddle, it is very uncertain where this will find you; it cannot in it's round about course convey to you any *military* news, and tho' we are going on very well here within doors, yet as one express has in all probability been lately taken by the enemy, I do not incline to say any thing which I would wish to be secret or confidential between you and myself, least it should find its way to Gaine's Gazette.

I congratulate you on the agreeable prospect of a glorious close to this campaign. I do not think the enemy can gain the pass at Billingsport. *Your* officers have behaved with the utmost gallantry. The Lords of our Navy may begin to hold up their heads. I suppose your chief pride lays at Eastward. Thompson does you full credit.

I hope daily to see the numbers of your lost tickets published as well as to receive an account of your health and prosperity.

Your friend,

J.L.

[P.S.] We shall forward news constantly to France in addition to two packets already sent.

Tr (DLC).

## John Penn to Arthur Middleton

My Dear Sir

York Town Octobr. 21, 1777

By a Letter from the Governor of New York we are informed that Burgoyne & his whole Army were Prisoners & sent to the Massachusetts Bay.

We also had some other Letters sent by Genl. Mifflin from Officers in our Army, That General Howe had begun two days ago to retreat towards Chester, that part of his Army had crossed the Schuylkill & that we were in pursuit of them.<sup>1</sup>

Commodore Hazlewood has been too hard for Lord Howe, who Commanded in person, in the last action the Roebuck in which his Lordship was and another large ship were rendered useless.<sup>2</sup>

I hope we shall soon have Howe's Army in possession, as our Troops are in high spirits having had the account of our success in the Northward & must exert themselves or be totally eclipsed by the Militia of the Eastern States. Eight thousand are gone to drive the enemy from Rhode Island, they are landed, Howe cannot stay here if we don't take him. Do be as well prepared as you can to defend Charles Town for fear that resentment should carry the Enemy that way again. I wrote a few lines to you this morning,<sup>3</sup> but do not know whether they will come to hand. I send a few extracts from Duch's curious Letter for your Lady's amusement; if I can get as much time, tell her I will copy all of it & continue after you, tho it contains 14

pages. My best wishes attend you both & the children, tell Maria not to forget me. If Congress moves towards Philada. I will take pains to get your Man Home again, I am with great regard, Dear Sir, Your obt. Servt.  
J. Penn

22nd. I got your favr. this morning, & had not time to copy the General's Letter. I suspect Congress will not agree to have Copies taken of Dutch's letter as moved & was denied yesterday—do let me hear from you as often as you can.

The following are said to be those taken by Genl. Gates:<sup>5</sup>

- 1 Lieut, General
- 2 Major Generals
- 7 Brigadier Generals
- 2 English Noblemen
- 1 Irish do
- 5,000 privates
- 15,000 stand of arms
- 40 brass cannon
- A Quantity of clothing

General Howe in Philada. with his army, General Washington in German Town.

MS not found; reprinted from *South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 27 (July 1926): 145–46. Addressed: "To Arthur Middleton, Esq., one of the South Carolina Delegates at Frederick Town, Maryland. If Mr. Middleton should be gone before this gets there, to be sent after him."

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 9:825.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently Penn is referring to the fact that on October 19–20, H.M.S. *Liverpool* and *Roebuck* ran aground as they were preparing to attack some Delaware River fortifications. Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, pp. 170–71.

<sup>3</sup> Only a fragment of these "few lines," dated "Wednesday 4 oclock" and addressed to "Arthur Middleton Esqr., Frederick Town, Maryland," survive: "... here to day who said General Mifflin gave him a copy of the list of Prisoners &c taken by General Gates, & that he had it from an officer who saw Burgoyne & Gates together. General Howe is in Philada. with his Army Genl. Washington at German Town. This account is brought by an officer who arrived here two hours ago." Stone Collection, MBU.

<sup>4</sup> See Henry Laurens to Robert Howe, October 20, 1777, note 3.

<sup>5</sup> See also the recently found October 22 Robert Morris letter in the Appendix, pp. 698–99.

## William Smith to Thomas Johnson

Sir

York Town October 21st. 1777

Inclosed you have copy of a letter from the Comee. of Albany which I forwarded yesterday from Hanover to Baltimore with directions to be sent immediately to Annapolis. A letter from Govr. Clinton gives the same intelligence to the Genl., copy of which he has forwarded to Congress.<sup>1</sup>—Though no express has yet arrived from



Genl. Gates confirming this very interesting intelligence, no doubt remains of its Authenticity. You have likewise inclosed Coppy of a letter recd. this morning by Congress from Genl. Mifflin, informing that the army are evacuating Philadelphia. No doubt remains of their being in motion, & I apprehend they will push to save N. York. Letters from Connecticut (I think of the 15th) say to-morrow 7000 men will make an attack on Rhode Island. I most sincerely congratulate you on this interesting & important intelligence. May we go on & prosper. I hope to have the pleasure to inform you in my next that these invaders have entirely abandoned this state.

I have the Honor to be, Sir, yr. mo. hble Sert. W. Smith

P.S. I have not time to write the assembly. Youll therefore please to communicate the above to both Houses.

RC (MdAA).

<sup>1</sup> See Cornelius Harnett to Richard Caswell, October 20, 1777, note 1.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir,

York 22d October 1777.

I Sent you a packet & Single Letter yesterday Morning by Durst Express & in the afternoon a Letter by Capt. Frans. Gallus whose Rect. for Sixty five Dollars lent him & to be repaid on my Accot. to you was inclosed. Among all the News which I have transmitted I forgot to mention a Portuguese Vessel taken by a privateer & carried into Boston. I have no doubt but that the Admiralty there will act a part consistent with Law & Sound policy, in that Case.<sup>1</sup> We are furnished thus casually with an opportunity of Shewing Portugal & Europe that we are not Pirates. If the circumstance is judiciously managed, the Portuguese made whole & dismissed in freindly terms America will gain ground as an Independant people.<sup>2</sup>

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the issues raised by this case, see Robert Morris to John Rowe, October 27, 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Laurens to Gervais, October 27, 1777.

## Richard Henry Lee to William Shippen, Jr.

Dear Sir

York 22d Octr. 1777 2 oClock

The slow, but sure moving Gates has not yet sent us his Inventory but an Officer who saw Burgoyne with Gates tells a Gentleman that passed this Town as follows—1 Lieutenant General, 2 Major Gener-

als, 7 Brigadiers, 5000 men, 15,000 Stand of Arms, 40 pieces of Cannon and a considerable quantity of Cloathing.<sup>1</sup>

FC (ViU).

<sup>1</sup> Lee drafted this letter on the verso of a copy of his October 18 letter to Shippen in which he enclosed 100 dollars for 25 gallons of wine. "I feel too sensibly," Lee had explained, "the number and weight of the obligations under which your goodness has laid me not to entreat earnestly that you will excuse me from this last effort of your friendship, and that you will suffer me to pay for the wine I had of you. The friendship that bears altogether on one side may be oppressive, and the excellence if not the existence of this virtue, depends on reciprocal communication of benefits."

## John Penn to James Wilson

Dear Sir

York Town Octobr. 22 1777

As I really wish not to be forgotten by a Gentleman I esteem as much as I do you, Have Inclosed you some extracts out of a very long letter written by Mr Duche to General Washington. Could you have thought it possible that he could have been such a ———. I leave it to you to [fill] up the blank.

I congratulate you on our success to the Northward. General Burgoyne and his whole Army are prisoners & sent to Massachusetts Bay. General Gates is moving towards New York to attack Genl. Clinton.

We are informed that Genl. Howe is retreating over Schuylkill towards Chester & that Genl W[ashin]gton is in pursuit. I hope great things. Indeed my good Sir, their Army must exert themselves now or be altogether eclipsed by the militia of the Eastern States. Too much praise cannot be given to Commadore Hazlewood, he has been superior to Lord Howe, who commanded in the late action in the Roebuck, that ship & another were rendered useless in the last action we hear.

Several days ago the enemy sent a Flag to the Commadore <sup>1</sup> advising him to submit, that it would be in vain to Contend agt. their great Force, promising him pardon &c, his answer was that he believed them Brave & was determined to merit their esteem by a Gallant defence, & that he would oppose them while he had one man left, that if any more Flags were sent he would fire on them. My Compls. to your Lady & am with great regard, Dear Sir, Your obt. Servt.

John Penn

[P.S.] Let me hear from you.

RC (OCIWHi).

<sup>1</sup> John Hazelwood.

## William Williams to Jabez Huntington

Dear Sir.

York, Oct. 22, 1777

Your Favor of the 14th Sept by Mr. Brown, and [. . .] some time before [. . .]

[It] was not possible to acknowledge the same [sooner, and] am now stealing time from public Business [to] thank you for your Favors, and am sorry I have [none] to return you. A multitude of incidental [matters] which I cant well describe and which cant [pos]sibly be dispensed with swallows up great part [of] the Time of Congress. Provisions and Regulations [of many] kinds and of great importance in [conducting] the affairs of such vast Extent and magnitude you can easily conceive are necessary and have [been] in [no] inconsiderable Degree realized in our Council of safe[ty] and other Departments.

[We] are really much bent and engaged to get thro [the] Confederation and Devote as much Time as [poss]ible to it, two or three Articles are pasd upon [of which] I wrote the Govor<sup>1</sup> (which I hope has [reached] him) but of less importance than those, the plan of a large Taxation seems also fully adopted, but they conceive it will go out with much more weight with or after the Confederation, there are reasons for this, tho I am not satisfied it is best to [wait for that] so long as this will necessarily carry it. [The ex]orbitant rise of every article etc. as [well as] depreciation [of the currency] is greatly alarming the States [and the device] of coercive [measures and] of regulating [prices they find] it impossible to execute and Congress [have] no practicable way to remedy the great and growing [evil] but a firm Union to establish the Credit of the [currency] which the Tribe of Speculators and other [gentry] begin to pick Flaws in etc., to [limit the quantity] but if possible to reduce it, before [. . . and to meet] future expenses by Taxation. These [measures will] certainly relieve us, if soon accomplished [and ch]earfully born, and if it please God, to grant [us] success against our [enemies] and [. . .] we hope it will crown the attempt with [success. . .]

MS not found; reprinted from Burnett, *Letters*, 2:529.

<sup>1</sup> See Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, October 11, 1777.

## Eliphalet Dyer to John Sullivan

Dear Genl

York Town Octobr 23d. 1777

I received your favor of the 15th Instant acknowledging the receipt of mine to you,<sup>1</sup> and giving me a very particular Account of the late Engagement near German town and of the part our Genll officers

took in that Affair. The prospects of a Compleat Victory seemed for some time most favourable but the Close proved inglorious to our Arms. Providence has so ordered but we have not any blame cast upon any particular officers from any quarter as yet, tho the Genll as far as I can recollect distinguished some & particularly your self for Good Conduct & Bravery in that Action. I hope your Jealousys may prove without foundation, the General whenever Occasion has offered, has mention'd your Merits with particular pleasure and Appeared to Wish for no ones services in the Army more than yours, and I do not recollect that in any letter to Congress he ever Mentioned Genll G——n<sup>2</sup> to have began that Action, or even to have Acted at all in it. His conduct in Camp or at Head quarters you can best Judge of, but in his letters abroad you Appear as much his favorite as any officer I know. There may be persons who may Wish to sow the seeds of discord & jealousy from the worst of Motives, & tho every Gentn ought to be upon his guard yet at the same time very cautious lest he be imposed upon by specious & pretended friends, who to evince themselves real ones, will be Indeavouring to Stirr up Jealousies & discord between those who ought to be so, I dare say you will readily distinguish them. The Gent from N—— H——re you mention,<sup>3</sup> am well persuaded has no very Cordial friendship for you. You know him & I need say no more, but in Justice to him I can say that on every Occasion wherein you have been attacked in Congress he has thrown in his mite in your favour and given his Vote against every measure which has been proposed Against you. But to Conclude, you may rest Satisfied that you have obtained a Compleat Victory & Conquest over your Enemies in Congress (& those who have Attackd you without). They now ware long faces, they hang their heads, they are mute, you will hear no further from them; every Attack that has been made upon you is now despised. Your friends not only rejoice but Triumph, all the malice of your Enemies is disarmd of its Sting, & Venome. Therefore I trust you will pay no more regard to the barking tribe but Shine on; every Attempt of detraction, instead of Effecting its purpose & design, has had a Contrary effect, & placed your merit in a more Conspicuous light, than if no attack had been made upon you. The glorious Success to the Northward I hope will enspire every breast with Emulation & That Genll How may soon with his Army be in the same Situation with his brother Burgoyne (not even his bonds excepted). Heaven prosper you and may our future Attempts against our Enemies in this Quarter, be Crowned with Compleat Success. I hear my son who you knew last year is now Lt Coll in Coll Chandlers Regiment, McDouglles Brigade. After a long continued illness almost ever since the Battle of Trenton has lately joined his Regiment. If you see him your kind Notice of him once in a while would be esteemed as a favor. Am with sincere Esteem & regard, yr Hle Servt,

Elipht Dyer



RC (MeHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Dyer to Sullivan, October 11, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Nathanael Greene.

<sup>3</sup> Nathaniel Folsom was the only New Hampshire delegate in attendance at this time.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Pensylvania Octr. 23d. 1777

A Gentleman is just arrived in Town who has been Lately in Genl Gates Camp & says he saw Genl Burgoyne with Our General. The Account he brings of the Surrender of the British is as follows: that 1 Lieut General (Burgoyne), 2 Majors General, 7 Brigadiers, 2 English & 1 Irish Nobleman and a Great Number of Officers and 5000 Privates were taken together with 40 ps. Brass Cannon, 15,000 Stand of Arms, a quantity of Cloathing, Warlike Stores, Baggage &c.

It is however surprising that Congress has received no[t] a Line from Genl Gates on this important Matter. Genl. Howe has removed his Army into or near the City & Genl Washingtons head Quarters are at German Town. Our people have as yet kept the Command of the River by possessing the Fort & Assisted by our Little fleet who have repulsed the Enemy's Ships Twice. A Report privails that the Defyance & Roebuck were terribly Shattered by Our Gallies a few days agoe. Shew this News to M<sup>rs</sup>. Hooper & Maclain &c. Your Letter to Mr Mitchel I sent to him & he acknowledged to me he received it. I never could get a Sight of John Daldson all the time I was in Philadelphia. I beleive he is ashamed to see me. The family live in the Country as Also Mr. Mitchel, West, Fuller & indeed all my old Acquaintances. I saw Mr. Tate about 2 weeks before I left Philadelphia, he told me had had seen Jackey a short time before that in good health at Burlington the Week Congress fled from the City, I intended to go to Burlington on purpose to See him. Let me know whether I am to bring him home with me in the Spring. I shall take Care to get him to me.

Negroes are not to be purchased at any price you would Choose to give. Neither Can I meet with a Distiller, all the Tradesmen except such as would not Choose to remove are in the Army, or employed by Congress at Excessive high wages. You had better employ a Distiller from Charles Town. I am entirely Satisfied with the Sale of half of the Distillery, & Mr Bru[. . .] Appointment to the Management of it. I congratulate you on the Success of the Compys. Vessels. You will be pleased to acquaint me who are the Members Chosen for Our Counties about C Fear & remember me kindly to all my friends. I have not time to write to any body but yourself & M<sup>rs</sup> Harnett.<sup>1</sup>

Give me the Prices Current in Wilmington of Tavern Charges, Market Stuff & Other Necessaries. I want to shew the People here how Cheap we can live in No. Carolina in proportion to the Extortion of this Country. I am glad to find you have a kind of a Press in Wilmington, I wish Jonathan would enlarge his paper. I really am ashamed to Shew Our paper to the Members of Congress. We have the Post at last Established here, but no Press, which prevents my sending you any News papers, I hope we shall not be long without this Necessary method of Conveying intelligence. I am, Dr Sir, Your sincere friend & Obed Servt,

Cornl. Harnett

RG (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> No letters that Harnett wrote to his wife during his term in Congress have been found.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir

York. 23d Octobr. 1777

It is with the utmost degree of pleasure I congratulate with you on your recovery & return to the Army, where I hope every circumstance will conspire to make you happy that you may have opportunities of gratifying your thirst for glory & I pray God to protect & preserve your valuable Life.

Permit me the honour Sir, to congratulate with you on the amazing Success of the American Arms in the Northern department. I scorn to triumph over even an ungenerous Enemy, but from my own feelings I am persuaded if I had been capable of publishing such a Braggadocio proclamation as we saw in the Month of July<sup>1</sup> & of following it with such daring menaces & unmanly acts of murder upon Women & Children as we have been witnesses of, I should have Surrendered my Self to a Pistol Ball in preference to becoming the prisoner of those people whom I had reviled by the Epithet of Rebels & every ignominious term. From the advantages of a River, an opposite Shore & a numerous powerful fleet I can scarcely hope & yet I cannot repress the wish, that your Army may have the honour of adding a Knight of the Bath<sup>2</sup> to the list of English Captives.

Your polite notice of Mr. Jno. Laurens lays a farther obligation on me, it afforded me pleasure to learn he had done his duty & I flatter my self he will persevere. If General Sir William Howe will faithfully transmit accounts of all preceding actions & consequences in the present Campaign he will afford his Master new matter for a Speech to Parliament.

I have not seen the French Gentleman who did me the honour to bring your Letter,<sup>3</sup> but will enquire of your black servant where he may be found & you may depend upon me Sir to attempt, at least, to

Serve him, nor Shall the Subject concerning Mr. De Valfort depart from my mind. I will this very morning inform my Self of the opinions of the War Office respecting that Gentleman. Mr. de Valfort is here, he called upon me the day before yesterday in order to get me to interpose in a dispute Subsisting between himself & a Waggoner relative to the freight of Baron de Kalb's Baggage, I censured the delinquent Carrier in Severe terms & recommended Mr. de Valfort to apply to two Gentlemen to arbitrate in the Case & I am told they have done him justice by mulcting the Waggoner very considerably. I do not think the Justice complete—it was easy to demonstrate the Baron's damages to have exceeded the Amount of the whole intended Freight. If Baron d'Kalb is not in the Army I know not where to address him, therefore think it best to return your Letter under this Cover.

Congress are apprized of large quantities of Clothing arrived from France & Spain but unfortunately at the distant ports of Boston, Charles Town & New Orleans. Distant as these are I have strongly urged the necessity of bringing the Clothing even in Waggons, the expense is not to be Set in competition with the Lives of our poor Soldiers, and if we consider, not too deeply, we might add our own Lives also, but I am afraid no measures for effecting this great purpose are yet in motion. I do not count the lost days to be in October but in January when the Cold will be intense. I will without fear of offence move again in this matter before the present day passes.

I have enquired very minutely of Mr. Morris relative to Packets for you from France he declares he never Saw nor heard of one. Will it be difficult Sir to confront the Post Master by Mr. Bedaux & Mr. Buhannan. A Letter to the Post Master might bring about an explanation. If he is in this Town you will soon hear further on the Subject. I will take the Liberty to question him very closely.

I have Seen a Letter containing London Intelligence pretty late in July. The Privateer in Capt Week's Squadron of three not very Capital ships out of France had made immense prizes in the Irish Channel & Spread such terror the Linnen Ships expected from Dublin &c were detained in port & the great annual Fair at Chester intirely empty & disappointed, a circumstance which never before happened from its commencement. Capt Weeks with 3 little Barques has effected more than has ever been done by the United powers of France & Spain. I construe this event in a manner differing from the opinions of Wiser politicians, the people in general in Ireland are our freinds & will use Stratagem to frighten the Ministry. Weeks however & his Subcommander were ordered by the French Ministry to be taken into Custody immediately upon their return & were actually in confinement at the same time their Ships were with great celerity fitting out for another Cruize.

“The Merchants had made two Representations to Lord North in

one was Stated the Loss of Great Britain at Sea Three Million Six hundred thousand pounds Sterling—in the other a much deeper Loss by the Balance of Trade with America thrown into the Lap of a Rival Power. The Loan for five Million had been soon filled by Subscription but payments were exceedingly tardy. Stocks had in earnest begun to fall & foreigners had also in earnest taken the alarm.”

Nothing that has happened in America Since July can administer that distracted Country, consolation. If these things are not new I have been impertinent, I beg you will be so good as to ascribe the trouble to that sincere respect & regard with which I profess my self &c.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> For further information about this June 20, 1777, proclamation by Gen. John Burgoyne, which was a source of great irritation to Laurens, see Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, August 17, 1777, note 5.

<sup>2</sup> William Howe.

<sup>3</sup> Lafayette's October 18 letter to Laurens is in Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:124–26.

## Marine Committee to James Nicholson

Sir

York October 23d. 1777

As we understand that the Frigate Virginia under your command is nearly ready for Sea and a prospect of your being able to get out, We desire you may proceed down the Bay of Chesapeake soon as you can with propriety taking under your care and convoy the Continental Merchant Ships that may be ready and such private Ships as apply for that purpose, all which you are to see safe out to sea if possible.<sup>1</sup> When you get out you are to proceed on the voyage directed by the Commercial Committee, and on your return to any part of this Continent give us notice thereof. Should you be fortunate in taking any prizes suitable for Sale in the West Indies carry them with you giving notice thereof to Mr. Stephen Ceronio or in his absence to Monsr. Carrabasse who will readily obtain permission to make sale of them, but it will be most agreeable to have prizes with Cargoes suitable for this Continent sent into some of our own Ports addressed to the Agents where they arrive. You are to inform us from time to time of your proceedings. We expect great care will be taken of the Ship, her Stores and Materials and that you will be as frugal in expences, and expeditious in getting out of Port as possible. Knowing you to be of a humane Temper we need not urge the propriety of treating prisoners with all the kindness your and their situation will admit of. As the Commercial Committee mean to order goods back by the Virginia you are to receive the same on board, and should the



Coast of Hispaniola be infested by any Cruizers that you can manage, it would be a good business to go after and seize them whilst the goods are getting ready. We are Sir, Your very hble servants

P.S. On your arrival at Hispaniola wait on the Governor Count D Argent and express to him the high sense Congress have of his favourable attention to the Interests of the United States of America in his former Government and that you were desired to beg a continuance of the same friendly disposition for the time to come.

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> For additional instructions regarding the intended voyage of the *Virginia*, see Marine Committee to Nicholson, December 2, 1777.

## William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Much Hond & dear Sir

York Town Octo 23d 1777

This acknowledges the receipt of your kind particular Favor of the 14th Inst by Mr Brown. Had sent you a Packett of the 6th by a Boston returning Express passing thro Litchfield to be thence forwarded to N Haven, where I supposed the Assembly [was sitting, with?] an Acco of the Ger. Town Action &c, & [one of the 11th by a man?] of Woodbury going directly t[o N Have]n, which hope you have recd. We hear a returning Express from this, was shot off his Horse by the Enemy, cant learn where, supposed to be Storrs, sent by Col Trumbull, & chard with Letters & drafts for money in his Fav., Letters from Col Dyer &c &c. I cant recollect that I sent any by Him, I think He set off a day or two before Brown's last return. Congress have on your recommendation, agreed to pay all Browns Accos. &c as Express & directed that he have them settled by the Comisrs at Hartford & that he be continued in Service, as a Continental Express.<sup>1</sup> Since my last Congress have made considerable progress in the Confederation, & have this day passd the 6th article, with addition that the Dutys &c dont interfere with the Terms of the treaty already proposed to France &c also the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th & 11th the last with a further Exception, as to Pirates. I hope it [will soon?] be got thro with. I wish it may [be ready?] before the assembly rises but it [is impossible?] to say, how other matters may int[erfere.]

Our last Accos from the Army are that Genl How has retired into the City with his whole Army, & erecting every Work of Defence in his Power from River to River. That the Vessels of Force Gallys, & Fort Mifflin make a gallant Defence. The Enemy are pushing at them with great earnestness, & it is said a very heavy Cannonade has been heard (even here) all the Morning, supposed in that Attempt. Genl Washington has recd. & instantly transmitted to Congress with contempt &

Indignation an astonishing Letter,<sup>2</sup> of 4 sheets from our late Chaplain, the great Patriot, Whig & reputedly very pious Mr Duche who stayd in town wherein He [. . .] & regrets his own Conduct in taking [. . .] paints Congress in a most con[ttemptible . . .]ted Light, unworthy Wretch [. . .] by all the respectable Characters [. . .] composed it & a pack of Attornys, Bankrupts & Men of desperate Fortunes, the Officers of the army no better, & the whole as a ragged Banditti, our Finances desperate, the Army beaten & driven, the navy despicable, taken, burnt & blocked up &c, & every misfortune exaggerated, & magnifies the mighty power of How, the vast Ease with which he has possed the Capital of America, the impossibility of resisting him, ridiculing the Idea of French asistance &c, the prospect of being now restored to Grace & Favor & constitutional Liberty, & professing the greatest affection for him<sup>3</sup> & conjuring him to recommend a Cessation of Hostilities &c &c, that all rests upon him solely & intirely as there is not a Man in America to second him, or keep his Men together &c & if every thing else fails, to *Negotiate for America at the Head of his Army*.

A temptation & a t[ryal of such?] Magnitude & Design, second to no[ne since the?] Prince of Devils, practiced upon our first Parents, but blessed be God, it did not find an Eve. If I had Time it wod be needless to descant upon the more than infernal Turpitude, Baseness & Folly of the Wretch. If I can obtain will eer long send you a Copy. There has been a debate, whether Copys shod be sufferd, is not forbidden, tho there were many minds.

You are kind enow to mention the affair of my Kinsman, if he shod settle upon the Terms, in the wretched State of our money he must starve without question, all the Hope is in the restitution of its Credit, if it please God to prosper Us, that must be the case, & without the former [. . .]tter for the latter nor any other [. . .] affair but I find my Bror. d[. . .]<sup>4</sup> or can stay.

The M[. . .] is drinking the Cup, if it please [God to?] restore Us the City, among other Things the taking it, will be the most happy means to distinguish & seperate the Chaff from the Wheat. I used every effort to persuade our Mr Webster to go out but in vain. He is by many thot a vile Tory also. The heart of man is deceitful & above all things desperately wicked. There have been striking Instances enow, without a Duche.

We know not the present State of the North River, I hope in kind Providence, that Harry Clinton may catch a Tartar, as well as his Spy. Anxiously wish to hear a happy Issue to the Rhode Island Expedition.

Our News from France looks still like a War but sure I am their own Interest will now & forever govern their Conduct.

I trust Mr. Brown will be sent back very soon as He is established a Continental Express, shod be much obliged if you will please to

[. . .] by Him with an Account of all our Emi[tted . . .] bills, their Periods, & the Taxes that [have been levied?] since this unhappy War took place.

We have abundant Reason to bless & praise the God of Armys, for the Success He has granted our nothern Forces.<sup>5</sup>

RC (NHi). This damaged, incomplete letter is in the hand of William Williams.

<sup>1</sup> This action was taken on October 21 after Trumbull's October 14 letter recommending Jesse Brown was read in Congress. *JCC*, 9:825.

<sup>2</sup> See Henry Laurens to Robert Howe, October 20, 1777, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to Washington.

<sup>4</sup> Three or four words missing.

<sup>5</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Williams to Trumbull, October 26, 1777.

## John Adams to Abigail Adams

My dearest Friend

York Town Octr. 24, 1777

It is with shame that I recollect that I have not written you more than two or three Letters these 5 Weeks, and those very short.

News I am afraid to write, because I never know untill it is too late what is true. From last Sunday to this Moment Fryday afternoon 4 o Clock, We have been in a state of tormenting Uncertainty concerning our Affairs at the Northward. On Sunday, We had News, from the Committee of Albany, through Governor Clinton and G. Washington, of a Capitulation of Burgoine and his whole Army. To this Moment We have no Express from Gates, nor any Authentic Confirmation.

Howe has drawn his Army into the City and Washington is at Germantown. Supplies will be cutt off, from the British Army, in a great Measure.

I am &c. yours forever,

John Adams

[P.S.] We shall finish a Plan of Confederation in a few days.<sup>1</sup>

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:357.

<sup>1</sup> A final draft of the Articles of Confederation was not approved for submission to the states until November 15. *JCC*, 9:907-28.

## John Adams to James Warren

My Dear Sir,

York Town, Octr. 24, 1777

We have got to a Part of the World, where We are scarcely able to procure any Intelligence.

We have as yet no certain Information, concerning the events at

the Northward, on the 14 and 15th of this Month, the whole of which I dare say before this Time are familiar to you. We have had Rumours, which lifted us up to the Stars.

We are now upon Confederation, and have nearly compleated it. I really expect it will be finished by the Middle of next Week.

We dispatched some Affairs, last Evening for your Board which Dr. Linn I suppose will convey to you.<sup>1</sup>

We shall consider immediately a Plan of Taxes for all the States. This is our Resource. I rejoice with Joy unspeakable that your Assembly, have adopted a Plan of such consummate Wisdom. I am,

John Adams

MS not found; reprinted from *Warren-Adams Letters*, 1:373-74.

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:836-37; and Marine Committee to the Eastern Navy Board, October 26, 1777.

## Committee of Commerce to Oliver Pollock

Sir,

York October 24th 1777

The Secret Committee of Congress being dissolved we have been appointed under the Stile & Title of the Commercial Committee to take up and continue the Business. We find they wrote you a long Letter on 12th June by Capt. LeMere to which we refer you. The present serving to acknowledge the Receipt of your Letters by Capt Pickles addressed to a former Committee of Congress which we have laid before Congress and by some inattention of the Secretary are now mislaid.<sup>1</sup> The chief purport being to advise us of the arrival of some Stores from Spain intended for the Service of this Continent and of the very favourable Disposition of the Governor Don Bernardo DeGalvez, we shall proceed to say what is necessary on these Subjects. Herein you will find inclosed a Letter for the Governor<sup>2</sup> which please to deliver and procure it to be well translated into Spanish for him, in this Letter we have requested him if Money be wanting in New Orleans for the due Execution of our Business to furnish what may be needful under Assurance that it will be repaid by our Ambassador at the Court of Spain and we doubt not he will comply.

This precaution we have now taken in consequence of Mr. Morris informing us that he finds you have made some Remittances on his Houses Account that will reduce the Balance he expected in your hands. With respect to the Stores sent out from Spain to New Orleans for our Service we are anxious to get them soon & safe to this part of America where they are much wanted & would be very useful. We have had it in Contemplation to order them up the Mississippi to Fort Pitt, but the length of time that would require, the heavy Expence & the Danger of Robbery by Indians has deterred us; therefore



we must trust them round by Sea and for this purpose we desire you will charter or purchase suitable sailing Vessels sufficient to bring the whole.<sup>3</sup> The Authorities vested in you by the Secret Committee we hereby confirm, and the Instructions contained in their Letters of which we now give you a Copy are quite sufficient for your Guidance in this Business as well as that they committed to you. We therefore recommend the same precautions they urged but beg you will expedite the Departure of those Stores as much as you can. Capt. Pickles tells us he has a fine Brigantine suitable for the Business of Bringing a Cargo along the Coast. If that be the case and the Governor & you should think him a proper Person to be employed you will agree with him accordingly. We have wrote the Continental Agents in Charles Town So Carolina<sup>4</sup> to hire or buy a suitable Vessel to carry Captain Pickles to New Orleans and that Vessel may be loaden back with part of the Stores. We shall cause another small Vessel to be sent from Virginia to carry Duplicates of our Letters and if she arrives safe she may be employed in the same Service. We are desirous of sending you supplies of Flour, as that would furnish Funds to answer the Demands this Business will occasion, but unluckily our Enemies Ships of War are so numerous as to block up effectually at present all those ports from whence that Article can be exported. We hope however to find them other Employment before long and shall be glad of Openings to make your frequent Consignments of this & other Articles.

We inclose you herein three blank Commissions for Privateers with the bonds & Instructions which we send you in full Confidence as our Agent that you will not grant them to any Persons but such as you know will strictly comply with the Terms prescribed in the Bonds & Instructions. If you should think it best to arm the Vessels which you purchase to bring the Stores for these States those Commissions may be filled up for them. We are &c.

Tr (DNA: PCC, item 50). Enclosed with Robert Morris' October 11, 1782, report to a congressional committee regarding Pollock's services. Another transcript, *ibid.*, fols. 191-93, indicates that Robert Morris, Henry Laurens, and William Smith signed this letter.

<sup>1</sup> The letter Pollock sent by Capt. Pickles—with an enclosure analyzing the defensive posture of West Florida—bearing the endorsement "Read Oct. 3d 1777," is in PCC, item 78, 1:121-29.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> For modification of these instructions, see Committee of Commerce to Pollock, November 21, 1777. Pollock's March 6, 1778, response is in PCC, item 50, fols. 57-59.

<sup>4</sup> Not found.

## Committee of Congress to Edward Hand

Sir,

York Town Octr. 24th. 1777

We enclose you herewith a resolve of Congress appointing us a Committee for the purpose described in the resolution, and we apply to you Sir as a Friend to the cause of America, and as an Officer high in rank in the United States, to give us the most full and particular assistance in your power, for the better accomplishing the end of our appointment.<sup>1</sup> We understand that Coll. Morgan has lately been confined on suspicion of disaffection to the interest of the United States. We wish to know the truth of this, and if true, the cause of it. Whether any and what inquiry was made into the affair, and on what principles an acquittal was founded. We rely upon your best aid in all things, that may contribute to the right discharge of our duty in this business, as it must be obvious of how great consequence it is, that the Agents for Indian Affairs should be of unquestioned attachment to the United States, and your residence for some time in that part of the Country, which has been Colonel Morgan's Scene of action, may furnish you with knowledge on this Subject, that distance denies to us.<sup>2</sup> We have the pleasure to inform you that the friendship & alliance of the Northern and Southern Indians comes well authenticated to Congress. It will be very hard and unaccountable that those in the middle district should alone be our Enemies.

We are, Sir, Yr. most obt & most huml. Servts.

Richard Henry Lee

Richd. Law

Daniel Roberdeau

RC (NN). Written by Roberdeau and signed by Roberdeau, Law, and Lee.

<sup>1</sup> This committee had been appointed on October 22 to investigate charges that George Morgan, agent for Indian affairs in the middle department, was conspiring against the American cause. On the 30th the committee sent Morgan a copy of the resolve authorizing their investigation and requested that he "take due Notice thereof and give your Attendance agreeable to the Requisition contained therein that a proper Enquiry may be made in the Premises." This letter—which was written by Law, signed by Law, Lee, and Roberdeau, and directed to Morgan "att Lancaster"—and Morgan's November 11 reply are in the Dreer Collection, PHI.

On the basis of the committee's November 20 report, Morgan was restored to his position as Indian agent and appointed deputy commissary general of purchases in the western district pending further investigation by three commissioners ordered to Fort Pitt; and on March 27, 1778, the commissioners cleared Morgan of all charges and praised his "uncommon degree of diligence in discharging the duties of his employment." See *JCC*, 9:831, 943; 10:313-14; and Max Saville, *George Morgan: Colony Builder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), pp. 145-54.

<sup>2</sup> Hand's December 21 response, in which he explained that he had released Morgan after confirming that the allegations against him were unfounded, is in *PMHB* 40 (October 1916): 467-69. For additional information on the general

conditions that Hand confronted on the western frontier during the autumn of 1777, see Edward G. Williams, *Fort Pitt and the Revolution on the Western Frontier* (Pittsburgh: Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania, 1978), pp. 71-78.

## Committee of Congress to Unknown

Sir,<sup>1</sup>

York Town in Pena. 24th Octr. 1777

The inclosed resolve will explain to you the design of our appointment, and the reason of our present application. As a friend to the cause of America, and as a Gentleman living on the spot which has been Colo. Morgans scene of action since his appointment under the United States, we are to request of you Sir your candid sentiments on the subject of charge against Colo. Morgan and you will further oblige us by obtaining the fair and uninfluenced testimony of disinterested persons on the same point. We wish to be well informed touching the political character of Mr. McGee,<sup>2</sup> whether he is considered as an Agent, or Friend, of G.B. and whether he does not profess himself a Subject of the British King. Whether Colo. Morgan has much intimacy with Mr. McGee & whether the latter was not carried by the former along with him on a visit to some of the Indian nations, and whether it was by Colo. Morgans influence that the Indians were induced to insist on Mr. McGees continuing to reside where he now does. Whether any letter has been seen from Mr. Hamilton the Governor of Detroit to Colo. Morgan, & what were the Contents of such letter.<sup>3</sup> We are satisfied that you will excuse the trouble we have here given you, when you reflect how important a thing it is that the department of Agent for Indian Affairs should be filled by a person of clear and unquestioned attachments to the United States, and the impossibility from our remoteness, of rightly answering the end of our [appointment] unless by the mediation of American friends in [that part] of the Country. We are Sir your most obedient servants,

R.H. Lee for the Committee of Congress

FC (PPAmP). In the hand of Richard Henry Lee; and endorsed: "Copy of letter to Fort Pitt concerning accusations agst Colo George Morgan."

<sup>1</sup> The recipient may have been the "Mr. Irvine" mentioned in Daniel Roberdeau's October 30 letter to Edward Hand.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander McKee—formerly a British deputy Indian agent at Ft. Pitt and recently an agent employed by Morgan—who had also been arrested by General Hand. See *PMHB* 40 (October 1916): 468; 58 (January 1934): 26-36.

<sup>3</sup> This alleged Henry Hamilton letter was the focus of the brief note of inquiry sent by the committee to Jasper Yeates this date. "Having acted in quality of Commissioner for Indian affairs in that quarter where Colonel Morgan's scene of action has been as Agent under the United States, we have reason to think you may illucidate the subject of our inquiry. We desire particularly to be informed by you, concerning a letter written to Colo. Morgan by Mr. Hamilton



Governor of Detroit." Written by Daniel Roberdeau, signed by Roberdeau, Richard Law, and Lee, and addressed to Yeates at Lancaster, this letter is in the Special Collections, MWalB. The commissioners investigating the allegations against Morgan apparently did not find any letters from Hamilton to discredit Morgan. However, it should be noted that Morgan had written to Hamilton in 1776 to gain his cooperation in maintaining the neutrality of the Indians. Max Savelle, *George Morgan: Colony Builder* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), p. 152.

## Henry Laurens to Pierce Butler

Dear sir.<sup>1</sup> York Town Pennsylvania 24th October 1777

Captain Allen from our Charles Town called on me last Evening & seeing the inclosed Letter in his hands I judged it best from the authorities with which you had vested me in this Parlour to return it. I hope I am doing right.

You will also receive inclosed Papers which will shew you the trifling News of the day, the Authority of that which recites Mr. Burgoyne's surrender is not yet established by a formal Letter from General Gates, nevertheless that event has been announced by such heralds & so often repeated by *different* persons through *different* Channels as puts the fact, in general, beyond all doubt in my mind.

The Action of the 7th when the Proclamation General<sup>2</sup> quitted with the field of Battle, his Tents, Camp Equipage & much Baggage & also bequeathed his Hospital of wounded Officers to the Victor had been whispered here three or four days before we received an authentic Account. General Gates did not write till the 12th. His Letter concluded "I am so pressed by business on all hands it is impossible to be minute, but my next shall be so."

The Capitulation at Saratoga is said to have been Signed the 14th, the formality of grounding Arms & surrendering reserved for the 15th. You know too much of Military affairs to admit the whole business to have been completed in a day—then allow our General five days as in the former Case for receiving returns arranging the March of the Great, Noble, & Inferior Captives & a little moment for reflection. If he did not write till the 21st upon this ground of computation his Messenger to Congress may be expected to morrow or the 26th, but there are people here who talk as if they beleived that a proper receipt & disposition of ten Generals & a whole Conquered Army were to be accomplished in as few seconds as they require to repeat the words in Congress. If the Intelligence should prove to have been mere report I shall enjoy in the mean time the pleasure of beleiving it true & that what is said to have happened will infallibly come to pass. I am with great respect, Dr Sir, y. M. H. Serv.

[P.S.] The Account from Delaware gives a dawn of hope that Your



Horses will be recovered. Depend upon it my endeavours will not be wanting. I am

FC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> Pierce Butler (1744–1822) was an Irish-born former officer in the British army who had resigned his commission in 1773 to pursue the life of a South Carolina planter. *DAB*.

<sup>2</sup> John Burgoyne.

## Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke

Honored Sir,

York Octr. 24th. 1777

The Inclosures will shew you how solicitous Congress are to have the Continental Battalions filled up, and Deserters apprehended.<sup>1</sup> The Extracts from Genl. Washingtons Letter<sup>2</sup> discovers his Anxiety upon the Subject, and that altho' he has Wrote to the States upon the Subject,<sup>3</sup> he has recd. no information but from One or two. I think I have seen that Provision has been made by the Legislature of the State of Rhode Island &c, agreeable to the Resolution of Congress of 31st July, I wish the last Resolutions also of Congress of the 17th of Oct. may meet with the Speedy Attention of the Genl. Assembly, and that Genl. Washington may have Notice immediately of what has been done, the Names of the Persons appointed to recruit Soldiers & apprehend Deserters, And that His Excellency may from Time to Time be made acquainted with, or rather have Copies sent him of every such Act or Resolution of the General Assembly, or Councill of War, as Affects millitary Opporations and Regulations. A Considerable Time before We left Philadelphia I recd. of the Secretary of Congress twenty Vollumes of the Journals of Congress, & in hopes of meeting with some opportunity of sending them, I had them packed up in a Box, but when we came away I was necessitated to send them over into the Jerseys under the Care of a Gentleman who removed them. I have now procured twenty other Vollumes & those I before recd. are to be replaced in their Stead if no Accident happens to them. Mr. President Hancock being upon his Return to New England, has been so kind as to take Charge of them & says he expects soon to be in Providence himself & will carry them with Him. If he should not, you'l be pleased to take some Opportunity of obtaining them from Him. Congress ordered each State a like Number.<sup>4</sup>

I enclose your Honor Copies of several Letters which will shew you the agreeable Situation Affairs are in here. If the Enemys Shipping can be prevented coming up to the City, It must prove fatal I apprehend to How's Army.

It is with peculiar Pleasure that I reflect upon the Honor which the Rhode Island Battallions have acquired to Themselves & their State.

Their Reputation is high, The Fort was defended by them alone. And to their Bravery under Heaven, & not to the sufficiency of the Works is that Victory to be attributed.<sup>5</sup>

We last Sabbath was a Week, had Accounts very Direct from Albany that Genl. Burgoin had surrendered himself and his whole army to Genl. Gates.<sup>6</sup> But to this Hour Congress has not a Word further from that Quarter. This raises Doubts with us, but before this, if it be true, you are well informed.

I am anxious to hear the Success of the Expedition upon Rhode-Island. May Heaven bless the Attempt. Grant us Deliverance, & Crown Us with Honor! And what is beyond all, Give Us grateful Hearts to improve his Blessings!

I have daily expected to see Mr. Ellery.<sup>7</sup> If any Accident happens to prevent his coming, I hope another Gentleman will be appointed, indeed that was to have been done long since. I informed the House at my first Choice, I could by no means be absent more than six Months. My affairs at Home will not permit it, nor did I prepar myself for a later Season. So that I must return next month. By that Time However I hope We shall have finished the long wished for C——n which we have at Times been upon ever since I came, but lately taken up with more Earnestness. My presence I presume may also be necessary when this comes before the Genl. Assembly for their Approbation. That they may be more particularly acquainted with the Subject, than they will be from a mere View of the Articles of it.

I have the Honor to be, your Honors most obedient, & very Humble Servt,  
 Henry. Marchant

RC (RH*i*).

<sup>1</sup> See the October 17 resolves on this subject in *JCC*, 9:813–16.

<sup>2</sup> On October 24 Congress ordered that an extract of Washington's October 21 letter to President Hancock "so far as relates to the recruiting service and taking up deserters, be sent to the executive powers of each state." *JCC*, 9:837; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:406–7.

<sup>3</sup> See Washington's August 4, 1777, circular letter to the states in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 8:10–11.

<sup>4</sup> The appearance of the manuscript suggests that Marchant wrote the remainder of this letter at another sitting. That some of the information found in subsequent paragraphs was written no earlier than the 27th is discussed in the next two notes.

<sup>5</sup> Marchant is referring to the role of the First and Second Rhode Island Regiments in helping to repel an October 22 Hessian assault on Fort Mercer, official news of which was not read in Congress until October 27. *JCC*, 9:841; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick) 9:422–24; and Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, pp. 172–88.

<sup>6</sup> As Congress first received news of Burgoyne's surrender on October 19, the "last Sabbath was a Week" was October 26.

<sup>7</sup> William Ellery took his seat in Congress on November 17. *JCC*, 9:931. The diary he kept during his journey to York, where he arrived on November 15, is in *PMHB* 11 (October 1887): 318–29.

## Marine Committee to Nicholas Biddle

Sir

York Town October 24th 1777

As quickly after you receive this as your Ship can be provided for the Voyage,<sup>1</sup> you are to proceed to France, and when there you are to be directed as to your future Cruize, and the disposal of your Prizes, by the Commissioners of the United States at Paris. For this purpose you are immediately on your arrival to send a trusty officer to acquaint the Commissioners of your arrival, and to receive their directions. Until you receive their answer it is left to your discretion and the intelligence you may collect of the enemies Cruizers, whether to remain at your Port of arrival, or make a Short Cruize, and repair for the reception of their answer to any other port; taking care to inform the Commissioners of your determination on this point.

Whatever supplies of any kind you may want for the Ship in France you will apply for, either to the Commercial Agent in France or any correspondent of the Commercial Committee at the Port where you may be, or to the Commissioners at Paris.

We would have you make as little shew as possible of being a Ship of Force, when you arrive, and during your stay in any Port of France; and let your stay in Port be as short as possible. It is not necessary to direct a person of your discretion to be very cautious of communicating to any person, either in America or in France, what is your destination or what your orders. If the Agents of the Commercial Committee of Congress should direct you to take on board Merchandize for France you are to follow such directions concerning this, and the delivery of the goods as you may receive from that Committee.

We desire you will correspond with this Committee by every suitable opportunity. Wishing you health & success, We are sir, yr Friends & hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> In his September 12 letter to the Marine Committee, which was read in Congress on October 3, John Dorsius, a Continental agent in South Carolina, reported the *Randolph's* recent return to Charleston with three prizes and indicated that since the frigate would be detained sometime for repairs new instructions for Captain Biddle's next cruise could reach him there. PCC, item 78, 7:127-29.

## John Adams to Abigail Adams

My best Friend

York Town Octr. 25. 1777

This Town is a small one, not larger than Plymouth. There are in it, two German Churches, the one Lutheran, the other Calvinistical. The Congregations are pretty numerous, and their Attendance upon





My best wishes attend you for every Good, & believe me, with  
Sentiments of Real Esteem & Regard, Dear Sir Your most Obed  
Huml Servt.,  
John Hancock

RC (NNPM).

<sup>1</sup> Hancock wrote two letters of a personal nature to fellow delegates before he left Congress a few days later. He penned the following brief note this day to Robert Morris: "Mr Hancock presents his most sincere Regards to his friend Mr Morris, sends him the Ballance of his Acco. & must beg his excuse that he has neglected it so long.

"Mr H. observing that Mr Morris frequently walks with a cane takes the freedom to send him a gold Head for a cane of which he Requests Mr Morris's acceptance as a small token of his real regard and friendship for him." *NYHS Collections* 11 (1879): 431-32.

And on October 30 he wrote an even briefer note to Richard Henry Lee assuring the Virginia delegate that he would "take the greatest Care to have the Letter Colo. Lee mentioned safely delivered; and . . . will give the French Gentlemen all the assistance in his Power, and in the Way Colo. Lee requests, if it should be necessary." Lee Family Papers, ViU.

## John Hancock to William Phillips, Isaac Smith, Sr., and Ebenezer Storer

Gentlemen

York Town 25th Octor. 1777

Inclos'd you have a Warrant on Mr. Appleton the Loan officer at Boston for Three thousand one hundred & eighty Dollars & 45/90, being to Discharge the Balla. which you represent to be due to Winthrop Sargent Esqr. which you will please to apply accordingly.<sup>1</sup>

As I shall hope nearly as soon as this reaches you, to have a personal Interview with you, designing to Set out for Boston to morrow morning, I waite adding but that I am with Sentiments of Esteem, Gentlemen, Your most Obedt Servt. J H Pt.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 12A).

<sup>1</sup> Congress approved the payment of this money to Phillips, Smith, and Storer in connection with their work as "agents appointed by the Marine Committee, for settling the accounts of the prizes taken by vessels fitted out by order of General Washington." *JCC*, 9:836. For further information on this subject, see the Marine Committee's letter to these three men of March 21, as well as John Adams to Isaac Smith, Sr., March 20, 1777.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Sir,

York Town, Pennsylvania October 25th. 1777

I have been duely honoured with your Favours of the 18th. and 21st <sup>1</sup> and immediately laid them before Congress; from whom I have it in Charge to forward the enclosed Resolves, with a Request that you will pay that Attention to them which they require.<sup>2</sup>

You will receive herewith two Bundles of Commissions, which I should have forwarded sooner, had I not been prevented from signing them, by a severe Fit of the Gout.

I have not as yet heard a word from Genl. Gates with Respect to the important Intelligence of the Surrender of Genl. Burgoyne and his Army. Should the agreeable News reach York Town before my Departure I will instantly forward it to you; or should it not arrive till afterwards my Successor will undoubtedly do himself that Pleasure.

I have the Honour to be, with the utmost Esteem, Sir, Your most  
obed & very hble Servt. John Hancock Presid

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:392, 406-8. The October 21 letter is in PCC, item 152, 5:143-44.

<sup>2</sup> The enclosed resolves, which were passed on October 20 and 22, dealt with Maryland artillery regiments, Gen. John Sullivan, certain military appointments and promotions, John Moore, the commissary of purchases, and army rations. JCC, 9:822-23, 828-31.

## John Hancock to George Washington

Dear Sir, York Town Pennsylvania October 25th. 1777.

I was duely honoured with your Favour of the 22d and am much obliged by the Expressions of Politeness & Friendship which it contains.<sup>1</sup> A few Months Relaxation, will, I hope, restore my Health and Constitution, and enable me still to contribute my feeble Efforts, in some Mode or other, to the Advancement of the Cause of Freedom in America. If I should not return to Congress,<sup>2</sup> it will be the Height of my Inclination, as it will also be in my Power, to render some Service to the *general Interest*, in my own native Country.

As I propose setting out on Monday and shall go thro' Bethlehem, I must request that the Escort of Horse you so politely offered to attend me, may meet me there.<sup>3</sup> Should I reach Bethlehem before them, I shall wait their Arrival. In the present critical State of our Affairs, I believe I should decline setting out for a few Days; but having wrote to Mrs. Hancock to meet me at some distance from Boston, I am under a Necessity of beginning my Journey on Monday Morning.

I am, dear Sir, with great Esteem and Regard, your most obed & most hble Servt. John Hancock

RC (DLC). In the hand of Jacob Rush and signed by Hancock.

<sup>1</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:413-14.

<sup>2</sup> This day Congress approved a report of the committee of the treasury, which had audited Hancock's presidential account, recommending that he be paid \$1,392 32/90 "for expenditures by him for the use of Congress." JCC, 9:839.

<sup>3</sup> For a description of the escort Hancock received, see Hancock's second letter to Washington, October 17, 1777, note.

## John Harvie to Thomas Jefferson

Dear Sir

[25 October 1777]<sup>1</sup>

I wrote you about ten days ago that General Gates had obtain'd a Signal Victory over General Burgoyne on the 7th. Inst. & now have the pleasure of informing you that a few days after this defeat Burgoyne with his whole Army Surrend'd themselves prisoners of War to the American General. It is said the prisoners Stores &c. taken are as followeth Viz 1 Lt. General, 2 Major Generals, 7 Brigadier Do. 5000 privates, 2 English noblemen, 1 Irish Do. 15,000 Stand of Arms 40 Brass Cannon and a Considerable Quantity of Cloathing. This great and Important News I transmit to you on the Authority of the Committee of Albany, Governor Clinton, and General Washington's Letters to Congress (except the Enumeration of Officers &c. which we have from another Quarter). No one doubts the truth of this happy Event Yet many feel the greatest Anxiety for a Confirmation of it under General Gates's own hand. Almost every day brings us News of some Advantage or other over the Enemy. Yesterday We received an account that General Howe had Abandon'd German Town & collected his whole force in Philadelphia & its Subberbs & that General Washingtons head Quarters was between German Town & the City. To day Major Clark Aid de Camp to General Green writes General Roberdeau that on the 22nd at 4 in the afternoon the Enemy made Several Attacks on Fort Mifflin, but were as often repuls'd. The Cannonade was very Severe & Continued till eight in the Evening. The next Morning it was renew'd with Redoubled Vigour. Two large Ships endeavour'd to pass the Chevaux de Freze while a Brisk fire was kept up from Province Island. At the same time a party of 3000 Attack'd Red Bank so that a Continual Fire was kept on all sides which lasted from 6 in the Morning till 4 in the afternoon without the least Intermission at which time the Enemy Quitted the Ships, haveing first set them on fire, & they soon after blew up. The explosion was dreadful. Thus ended the Day. Every thing seems quiet this Morning (the 24 being the Date of his Letter). He believes this will be their last effort & that they will certainly quit Philadelphia. He was inform'd one of the Ships was call'd the Augusta & that 300 Hessians were drown'd. Could you have thought these Forts and Batteries were so formidable? As this is Saturday evening and of course Holliday with Congress<sup>2</sup> haveing heard you several times mention Mr. Dechsay with Approbation I will give you the Conclusion of a Severe Libel against Congress & the Army Address'd by him to General Washington. After Attempting to refute the Idea of foreign Assistance or a European War, Magnifying the power & Clemency of Great Britain, Reprobateing his own Conduct for the part he took Early in the Dispute—he very Modestly Advises the General to demand of Congress



an Immediate Negotiation with Lord & General Howe and if they refuse a ready Compliance to disavow their Authority, give up the Seditious Members as proper Sacrifices to Government and treat for America in his own person at the Head of his Army. What think you of this Invidious Hypocrite now? On viewing what I have wrote You may infer this was a publick Address. No such thing, it was Couched in a Letter to the General in which he makes the warmest professions of Esteem & friendship & sent by a secret Emissary. I should have been more Minute if I was not certain you would see a Copy of the whole Letter in Virginia as the names of one or two of our Countrymen are mention'd with high Encomiums—<sup>3</sup> & you know they have friends here who would not wish to See Mr. Dechsay's panygerick on them Conceal'd from the Eyes of the publick. I hope we shall get through Confederation time enough for our Assembly to take it up this Session as the Attention of Congress is principally Confin'd to this Object. I fear the Length of my Letters will exhaust your patience but as you know my Motive is to give you the fullest & Earliest Intelligence of Matters highly Interesting you'l require no Apology for prolixity. What am I to do with your Money for Colo. Spotswood as I understand he has return'd to Virginia? Be Kind enough to inform Mr. Wythe that Doctr. Redman is in Philadelphia & that it is a Rule with Congress for no Seal'd Letter to go into the City. I have his to that Gentleman still in my poss[essio]n & should be glad of his directions about it. I am Dr. Sir Yr. most Obt. servt.,  
Jno. Harvie

RC (DLC). Jefferson, *Papers* (Boyd), 2:37–39.

<sup>1</sup> This letter has been dated on the basis of internal evidence. Harvie states that he was writing on a Saturday and most of the news reported had reached York during the week preceding Saturday, October 25, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Congress did not hold an afternoon session on October 25.

<sup>3</sup> At this point Harvie inserted above the line "B & H," a reference to Carter Braxton and Benjamin Harrison.

## Henry Laurens to Robert Howe

Dear General,

York 25th October 1777

Permit me to refer to my late Letter of the 20th by Durst an Express. I have notified Mr. Hancock of the present Safe conveyance & again requested the honour of transmitting his Letter with your Commission.<sup>1</sup> Depend upon it I will Send them to you in time if possible, was his reply—granting the possibility & you will find his packet in Company with this, but the embarrassment which no doubt he feels from a variety of business in the moment of his leaving Congress, will probably prove an impediment.

By a New hand from the Northern department we have a Scrap



of the detail of General Burgoyne's Surrender which you will See on a peice of paper within but no Authentic Letter from General Gates has yet appeared, whence Some people begin to doubt the truth of the Accounts transmitted by General Putnam & General Geo Clinton—announced also in public Orders & the firing 13 Cannon by General Washington.

According to Mr. Gates's custom I say his advice cannot come to hand till this Evening or to morrow & in the mean time I will not be bilked of the pleasure of beleiving a Story so well told & so often repeated.

The Delaware affair which you will find upon another peice is Glorious. Don't you think those Cannoniering Heroes Commodore Hazelwood of the little Fleet, Colonel Smith at Fort Mifflin & Colonel Green, of Rhode Island, at Red Bank, deserve to be Canonized? Colo. Bradford formerly a printer in Philadelphia has had a great Share of merit in this noble perseverance. General Washington threw into the Fort a few days before the grand Action 2 or 3 hundred Stout fellows volunteers who had been accustomed to Fire & Water. Is not the Knight of the Bath verging fast toward a Shameful retreat or a more Shameful surrender, I don't think the latter impossible, his withdrawing from the Field into Philadelphia & fortifying demonstrates he had not sufficient Numbers for attack. The large detachments which were made upon the late occasion has rendered him less capable of defence. Be that as it may if we continue as now in all probability we shall, Masters of the River, he will in a few days have nothing to eat. The Game our General is playing I hope is the best & you Shall know it in due time. Some things have happened which have induced me to Send Duche's Letter to the president where if tis worth your trouble you may read a System of flattery & tampering Rascality becoming the piety & honesty of a wretched Duche or Dodd. I have not been able to obtain a Copy of his prayer. I am well assured however by a Gentleman of a good memory & more viracity that when he affected to pray, among other equally Strong terms he constantly offered these. Bless our General & our Army, Shield & give them victory in the day of Battle—make them Instruments in the establishment of Liberty & Independency—teach our hands to War & our fingers to fight—Subdue our Enemies, let their Weapons in Battle fall from their unnerved Arms &c. &c. Alas! the frailty of human nature. In this view I pitied Dodd & I commiserate the abject State of Duche!

The more I reflect upon the Contents of the Letter particularly upon the truth calculated to deceive "I write not under the Eye," the Stronger is conviction that Lord & General Howe are in a State which renders Treaty a desireable object shackled at the Same time by Orders which will not admit of an approach from their Side, if such were their circumstances on the 8th October how galling are their fetters now at the 25.

General I will not Insult you by advice to be prepared guarded in the district committed to your Charge. I know your vigilance—tis time to releive you. My Dear Sir I wish you all happiness.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> President Hancock wrote brief letters to Robert Howe and Alexander McDougall on October 27, informing them of their October 20 promotions to major general. PCC, item 12A, fols. 305-6; and JCC, 9:823.

## Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry

Dear Sir:

York, Penn. 25 Octo. 1777.

The *slow* but *sure* moving Gates has not yet sent us his glorious Inventory. However, the intelligence of Burgoyne's surrender comes to us through such good channels that we do not doubt its truth, but impute Genl. Gates' silence to his necessary attention to the great business of disposing properly of so many prisoners &c., &c. I lately wrote Mr. Page<sup>1</sup> that the enemy had quitted Philadelphia. This came to us from the D. Quartermaster General, Col. Lutterlock, but it seems the motion of the enemies army was only from German Town, within their lines that cross the Common of Philadelphia from Delaware to Schuylkill. The body that crossed Schuylkill when Howe was supposed to be retreating was 1,500 as convoy to 150 Waggons sent to Chester for provisions. The narrowing their lines, and sending for provisions, evidences a design to keep Philadelphia if they can. But how they can, the inclosed letter from an Aid of Gen. Green will best satisfy you,<sup>2</sup> for if they cannot get their ships up, it is not possible for them to remain at Philadelphia. I am just now well informed that Gen. Washington intended to move his army to the Chester side of Schuylkill, in order to cut off the enemies' intercourse with their Ships, and the better to aid the Fort on Delaware. That a Strong body of Militia will be left above German Town to prevent evil disposed persons from sending provisions to the enemy. I hope Burgoyne's surrender will be followed by that of Howe.

I am dear Sir affectionately yours, Richard Henry Lee

[P.S.] We have detained the Express from Col. Mason<sup>3</sup> to carry the authentic news about Burgoyne.

Mud Island is that on which our fort is placed.

MS not found; reprinted from Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:107-9.

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> Lee enclosed a copy of Maj. John Clark's October 24 letter to Daniel Roberdeau reporting the repulse of Hessian attacks on Forts Mifflin and Mercer, which is in Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:108-9.

<sup>3</sup> David Mason's September 6 and 9 letters requesting money and supplies for Virginia troops marching northward were read in Congress on October 21 and are in PCC, item 78, 15:257-59, 261-62.

## William Williams to Mary Williams

[ante October 25, 1777]<sup>1</sup>

... it seems to me, a Spirit of Slumber is fallen upon the Children of God, & the rest of the World are asleep in Death. A want of Patriotism, Virtue, Love of our Country seems to have pervaded all Orders. A Selfish, oppressive Spirit, a thirst after money & preferment, pleasure & Vanity, amazingly prevails & God is not in all our Thoughts. This is black & dark, but Gods Mercy is boundless & infinite, & endures forever, & tho we deserve & can expect nothing for our own Sakes, yet our God remembers Mercy for thousands of Generations of them that Love & fear Him, doubtless our forefathers were of that happy number, & I hope & trust He will not forsake Us, their degenerate Children, but will work for his own Name Sake.

Octo 25

Notwithstanding our unworthiness We have had great Success at the northward, blessed be God, & there is reason to hope How will not hold his Possession. The last news is, contrary to reasonable Expectation, that our Forts & Ships yet hold the river, & have destroyed, or caused to be destroyed two Ships of about 60 Gun each, as I have wrote my Bror Docr,<sup>2</sup> & that How is distressed for Wood, Houses &c, pays 20 pounds a Cord &c & indeed it is not much better here as to things in general. Tea is abt. £9 the pound, Coffee 12/ or more, bad brown Sugar 10 & 11/ a pound, salt without bounds 5 or 6/ a pint, butter & Cheese 5 & 6/ a pound &c.

I cod write another Sheet, but it is high Time to stop, & more so as I hope to hear from you again soon. Mr Brown is by Congress established a Continental Express, & will come back I trust very soon. By him I propose to send home some thin Cloaths, as I did before which He tells me he delivered, tho you dont mention it. Pray send by him my mittens & woollen Gloves, none are to be bo't here & also my flannel under Waistcoat, tho a poor thing, I shall want them to ride home in.

I hope to come by the End of November, but cannot determine. Whenever Providence permits, the Time will be most welcome. May God in mercy preserve Us both, & give us to rejoyce in his great Goodness, & to see one another in peace & Safety. Remember me to the dear little ones, I fear I can bring them nothing, as I am in quite another place than Philaa. I forget not your kind & dear Mother & other Connections: nor Sally. Hope She will stay with You. My dear Love, I am tenderly & affectionately & intirely Yours,

Wm Williams

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Only the last two pages of this letter, which Williams resumed writing on October 25, have been found.



<sup>2</sup> Not found; but a copy of Maj. John Clark's October 24 letter containing news from the Delaware River forts, in Williams' hand and endorsed by him "recd. 25 & is Confirmed since," is in the Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., Papers, Ct. The two British men-of-war that were burned on October 23 were the *Augusta*, 64 guns, and the *Merlin*, 18 guns. Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, pp. 195-99, 446.

## John Adams to Abigail Adams

My dearest Friend

York Town Octr. 26, 1777

Mr. Colman goes off for Boston Tomorrow.

I have seized a Moment, to congratulate you on the great and glorious Success of our Arms at the Northward, and in Delaware River. The Forts at Province Island and Red Bank have been defended, with a Magnanimity, which will give our Country a Reputation in Europe.

Coll. Green repulsed the Enemy from Red bank and took Count Donop and his Aid Prisoners. Coll. Smith repulsed a bold Attack upon Fort Mifflin, and our Gallies disabled two Men of War a 64 and 20 Gun ship in such a Manner, that the Enemy blew them up. This comes confirmed this Evening, in Letters from Gen. Washington inclosing Original Letters from Officers in the Forts.<sup>1</sup>

Congress will appoint a Thanksgiving, and one Cause of it ought to be that the Glory of turning the Tide of Arms, is not immediately due to the Commander in Chief, nor to southern Troops. If it had been, Idolatry, and Adulation would have been unbounded, so excessive as to endanger our Liberties for what I know.

Now We can allow a certain Citizen to be wise, virtuous, and good, without thinking him a Deity or a saviour.

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:360-61.

<sup>1</sup> Washington had sent the October 23 letters of Maj. Samuel Ward and Commodore John Hazelwood reporting on the repulse of the British forces at Forts Mercer and Mifflin. They were read in Congress on October 27. See *JCC*, 9:841; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:422-24.

## Samuel Adams to Arthur Lee

My Dear Sir

Philadelphia, Oct. 26th, 1777.

Your several letters, with their enclosures, came to my hand. And although I have not hitherto acknowledged to you the receipt of them, I assure you I have been and am still improving the intelligence you have given me to the best of my powers, for the advantage of this country.<sup>1</sup> From our former correspondence you have known my senti-



ments. I have not altered them in a single point, either with regard to the great cause we are engaged in, or to you, who have been an early, vigilant, and active supporter of it. While you honour me with your confidential letters, I feel and will freely express to you my obligation. To have answered them severally, would have led me to subjects of great delicacy; and the miscarriage of my letters might have proved detrimental to our important affairs. It was needless for me to run the risk for the sake of writing; for I presume you have been made fully acquainted with the state of our public affairs by the committee. And as I have constantly communicated to your brother R.H. the contents of your letters to me, it was sufficient on that score for him only to write, *for he thinks as I do*.

The Marquis de la Fayette, who does me the honour to take this letter, is this moment going; which leaves me time only to add, that I am and will be your friend, because I know you love our country and mankind.

I beg you to write to me by every opportunity.

Adieu, my dear sir,

MS not found; reprinted from Adams, *Writings* (Cushing), 3:412-13.

<sup>1</sup> Adams' most recent extant letter to Arthur Lee was dated July 4, 1777.

## Samuel Adams to Samuel P. Savage

My dear sir

York Town Pennsylv. Octob 26 1777

I heartily congratulate you on the entire Victory obtained by General Gates over Burgoin. This is a Striking Instance of the Truth of the Observation in Holy Writ "Pride goeth before a Fall." Our sincere Acknowledgments of Gratitude are due to the supreme Disposer of all Events. I suppose Congress will recommend that a Day be set apart through out the United States for solemn Thanksgiving.

I rejoyce that my Friend General Gates, *after what had happend*, is honord by Providence as the Instrument in this great Affair. The N England Troops stand high in the Estimation of all sensible and impartial Men.

Inclosed is a Letter which shows that there are Heroes also in this state.<sup>1</sup> I fancy Howe is now as much in the Power of Genl Washington as Burgoin was of Gates. God grant he may share a similar Fate! Hazelwood and his brave officers and Seamen merit great Praise.

I receivd your favor by the Post and thank you for the Inclosures.  
Adieu my Friend. Yours in haste, S Adams

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Adams probably enclosed the same Jonathan Mifflin letter that he sent to James Warren this date.

## Samuel Adams to James Warren

My Dear Sir, York Town in Pennsylv., Oct. 26, 1777

We have just now receivd a satisfactory Account of the great Success of our Arms on the 14th Inst. under General Gates. The Express is expected every Hour. I have Time only to congratulate you on this and also on a successful Engagement on the Delaware, an account of which is containd in a Letter, Copy of which I inclose.<sup>1</sup>

I hope our Countrymen will render the just Tribute of Praise to the Supreme Ruler for these signal Instances of his Interposition in favor of a People struggling for their Liberties. Congress will, I suppose recommend the setting apart *one* Day of publick Thanksgiving to be observd throughout the united States.<sup>2</sup> If Burgoin is allowd to reside in Boston, will he not by his Arts, confound if not seduce the Minds of inconsiderate Persons? *Sat. Verbum Sapienti.* Adieu my Friend. S. A.

[P.S.] Howe it is said has published a Hand bill in Philadelphia setting forth that Burgoyne has gaind a complete Victory having taken Gates and all his Army Prisoners, and that he is in full March with a victorious Army for Albany and New York.

It needs no comment.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> At the bottom of the body of this letter Adams copied Col. Jonathan Mifflin's October 24 letter to Gen. Thomas Mifflin reporting the repulse of the British forces at Forts Mifflin and Mercer, to which Adams appended the following explanation. "Colo. Green [Christopher Greene] is one of the Rhode Island Battalions. Genl. Washington upon his Arrival at Camp honord him with the Command of the Fort at Red Bank." *Warren-Adams Letters*, 1:374-75.

<sup>2</sup> Upon receiving Gen. Horatio Gates' October 18 letter enclosing a copy of the convention with Gen. John Burgoyne, on October 31, 1777, Congress appointed a committee to set aside a day of thanksgiving. See *JCC*, 9:851, 854-55.

## Elbridge Gerry to Thomas Gerry

Dear Brother York Town in Pennsylvania Octr 26. 1777

By a Letter from Colo Jonathan Mifflin D.Q.M.G. (dated Head Quarters J Morris's Octo 24th 1777 5 oClock P.M.) to General Mifflin, who is indisposed at Redden, which the General has sent to Congress, We have the following Intelligence.

"The Day before Yesterday at 4 o Clock P.M. Count Donop with 1200 Hessian Granadiers made their Appearance before the Garrison at Red Bank,<sup>1</sup> & by Flag demanded a Surrender; which being refused they made an immediate Attack, forced the Abbatis, crossed the Ditch & some few had mounted the pickets. They were so warmly received

that they returned with great precipitation, leaving behind the Count, & his Brigade Major who are wounded & in the Fort. The killed & wounded agreeable to the Letter are 500.

"Leut. Colo<sup>2</sup> Green who commanded, played upon them a very good Deception. When the Flag came in he concealed all his Men but 50 saying 'with these brave Fellows the Fort shall be my Tomb.' He had 5 killed & 15 wounded.

"Yesterday an attack was made upon Fort Mifflin<sup>3</sup> by 6 Ships which were warped thro the Cheaveux de Frizes at Billingsport in the Night. They began the Cannonade at Day Break, which continued very hot till 10 oClock, when the Gallies forced them to give Way. In retiring, a 64 Gun Ship (said to be the *Augusta*) & a Frigate (the *Liverpool*)<sup>4</sup> ran ashore & were soon set on Fire by their own People. Two Men were wounded."

The above News is confirmed so far as it relates to the Loss of the Ships, by a Letter from Major Clark A D C to General Green, who being wounded is employed to obtain Intelligence; he says the explosion of the Ships exceeded all Description & that Red Bank had been attacked, so that We have no Doubt of the Fact. I am in Haste, yours &c,

E Gerry

P.S. We have not yet the particulars of General Gates Success.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Gerry inserted an asterisk at this point and wrote in the margin: "one of our Fortifications on the Jersey side of the Delaware."

<sup>2</sup> Gerry inserted an asterisk at this point and wrote at the foot of Mifflin's letter: "It should have been wrote 'Colo Green' [Christopher Greene] of one of the Rhode Island Batalions to whom General Washington gave the Command of the Fort."

<sup>3</sup> Gerry inserted an asterisk at this point and wrote in the margin: "Another of our Fortifications [on] an Island in Delaware."

<sup>4</sup> During this engagement the British lost the *Augusta* and the *Merlin*, not the *Augusta* and the *Liverpool*.

## Henry Laurens to John Rutledge

Dear Sir

York 26th October 1777

I had the honour of addressing your Excellency the 19th Inst. by Durst an Express. My Duty to the State calls upon me to employ the present bearer for conveying this dispatch relative to the Case of the Brig Success which is represented by Mr. Attorney General of So. Carolina to be of great importance & which your Excellency has recommended to the attention of the Delegates.<sup>1</sup> About the 20th or 21st Inst. I informed my Colleague Mr. Heyward, that an application had been made by Capt Arthur for a hearing & determination of his



Appeal, that I had therefore obtained leave to withdraw from the Bench of Appeals as well to avoid a suspicion of being an Interested judge as to act in support of the Decree, that a Court was to be held the next Morning, requested his advice & assistance & obtained a promise of both. Mr. Heyward then informed me he had received a Letter on the Subject from the Attorney General which he soon after put into my hand. The Court met at the time appointed, I attended & to my great Surprise the Advocate employed by me, Mr. Rush, admitted without hesitation the authenticity of the Records & Appeal as produced in Court under Notarial Seal. As Mr. Heyward did not attend & I much disliked the tameness of my Advocate I moved the Court to adjourn in order that I might further confer with Counsel before we Should enter upon pleadings.

I considered the Attorney General's Letter as deserving notice & had therefore put it into the hands of Mr. Rush who perused & returned it. Saying, what appeared to me very extraordinary that he had been Speaking to Captain Arthur & his Proctor & they were exceedingly anxious to put an end to the business & he requested I would not oppose it. Mr. Rush's general good Character & good disposition forbid a remark which his conduct would have warranted tho' I don't mean even to insinuate that it would seem as if those Gentlemen had been Speaking to him. He asked if I would permit him to apply to Mr. Heyward—which I not only consented to but urged in hopes of obtaining the aid of my Colleague & also from an assurance he would be of my opinion that a determination ought to be postponed until we should receive the necessary papers promised by Mr. Moultrie.

The Bench were again convened the Morning of the 25th & as Advocate Rush did not appear but Mr. Lewis his opponent attended. In the absence of Mr. Rush I moved the Court upon the ground of Mr. Moultries letter for a further day in order to obtain Evidence & was very warmly & earnestly opposed by Mr. Lewis. The Subject was plain & easy, I found my Self in no embarrassment for want of a proper reply until I was questioned upon the receipt of the Letter, nor was I then distressed on my own Account, truth dictated that Mr Heyward had received it Some time Since & that the president of the Court had been informed the day it came to my hands. Mr. Heyward was Sent for & asked when he had received the Letter. He answered about Six weeks ago, that he thought it of no consequence, that Mr. Moultrie had been very careless, that he had not spoke to Captain Arthur upon the occasion but that Mr. Rush had spoke to him & he had told Mr. Rush he had no objection to bringing on the Trial, he did not see why Captain Arthur should suffer for Mr. Moultries carelessness. This reply as it came without previous intimation & as there had ever been a good understanding between my Colleague & my Self & no deficiency of respect or attention on my part in the present Instance affected me & accounted for Mr. Rush's absence who had



been so extremely averse from my prayer for Time, It had likewise a visible effect upon the Bench.

I however derived Some consolation from hearing my Colleague in one Short answer Censure the Attorney General for negligence & acknowledge he himself had been in possession of a Letter from Authority near Six Weeks without disclosing the Contents to those persons to whom he was particularly instructed to make them known. I will not be second to any Man in point of Candor but there appeared to be no necessity for a display upon this occasion. I beg your Excellency will be assured I do not mean by any thing I have Said to Censure my Colleague, I am persuaded he Spoke the genuine Sentiments of his mind & whatever impressions these might have made I do not beleive he meant to lessen me in the Esteem of the Court, nevertheless I flatter my Self Your Excellency will agree that if he had communicated his opinion in private every good purpose would have been answered, & I am sure much trouble saved in which I am now unavoidably involved, by an abrupt declaration directly contrary to the tenor of my petition founded upon Instructions which he had put into my hands & in which I had intreated him to join. Your Excellency will also from hence receive information why you are addressed upon public business by a Single Delegate, which is the chief end I have in view. Thus left to Struggle without a Friend I proceeded to expostulate with the Judges—the Cause before them was not mine—it was the Cause of the State of So. Carolina, was of a new impression & of the highest importance in its consequences to the 13 United States. Admitting the charge of remissness on the part of the Attorney General which I might have expected to hear without foundation from the Appellant the Interest of the State of South Carolina deserved some consideration—the enforcing obedience to the Resolves of Congress, more, that I had no doubt in my own mind of Sufficient ground for Supporting the Decree, & that in such assurance were the Cause my own I would wish for no other Evidence than those already produced, but that I considered the Attorney General's Letter as an Instruction on behalf of the State to the Delegates which barred me from acting until I should receive further power from the [Appelles?], upon the whole I prayed for forty days adding that Should the expected papers in the mean time arrive I would immediately give notice to Capt. Arthurs Proctor & hasten a final determination for I had no wish or desire to injure Captain Arthur. I was Strongly induced to pray for time from another motive, to gain the assistance of a Second Advocate. Mr. Rush was not only desirous of bringing on a hearing but had told me he feared we should lose the Cause which I could not beleive & therefore intimated to him my design to call in assistance. The refusal by the Judge & by the Register in obedience to the Judge's order to grant Copies of the proceedings to the Appellant underwent, from possibly the weaker Side of the Bench, severe &

unmerited Strictures which called for all the defence that my abilities could afford. I denied the allegation, that the Judge had refused to admit Mr. Arthurs appeal, he had refused to receive or Record a paper abounding with Insolent, unjust & equally unnecessary charges against himself, but had nevertheless condescended to promise he would receive an Appeal expressed in proper terms & to the purpose. The Cause had been tried before a Jury of twelve Men approved of by the Appellant, Men all personally & most of them intimately known to him, the Judge in promulgating his Decree had acted as Executor of the Law not as Sole Judge of the merits of the Cause. It was therefore Cruel as it was unjust to Insult him for pronouncing a Sentence which was the natural effect of the Verdict of an impartial Jury. I appealed to Gentlemens own feelings & added that I had heard one Gentleman of the Bench express his Surprize that the Judge had not committed the proctor for a Contempt.

The Court now consisting only of four were divided in their opinions which egged me to declare that I should esteem the Attorney General's Letter as a prohibition to my interfering in the Cause until I had at least applied for the promised Evidence. I should submit to the Bench to act as they should think unwarrantable, I felt an assurance of confirmation to the Decree whenever the Merits should be considered, but if upon a premature determination it should happen otherwise, my duty would oblige me to protest at large. It was determined to indulge me with forty days, a short space of time for going to Charles Town waiting the liesurely progress of Mr. Attorney & returning to this place or perhaps as I wish to Philadelphia & I have informed Mr. Heyward of my purpose to Send this bearer express.

As your Excellency has been pleased to think this business of such moment as to recommend it to the Delegates I am persuaded there will be no delay on your part. The Express should have at least two & twenty days allowed for his return, the Roads will be bad & weather severe, he hopes to get to Charles Town in 18 days & not to be detained there above 48 hours. I have only to add that if the Act of Assembly enjoining Masters of Vessels to wait on the Commander in Cheif within a limitted time after arrival was not among the exhibits intended to be Sent it may be useful to transmit an authenticated Copy, altho' I am apprized of Mr. Arthurs having first landed in George Town.

Reflect a moment if you please Sir upon our present High Court of Appeals, five persons a Committee of Congress, not all of them, as witness the present writer, Lawyers or conjurers, empowered by a very Summary mode or rather no mode of proceeding & not under the obligation of an Oath to Stem the Verdict of twelve good & true Men Sworn to do Justice, to blemish the reputation of a Judge bound under an Oath of Office & to determine upon property to the highest

Amount, & correct me if I err in declaring it an unwise & dangerous Institution. I think it merits consideration whether Delegates should not be instructed to move Congress for a Repeal of their former Resolution & to recommend a more perfect establishment within each State. I know the confederation will be thrown in as an obstacle to any thing that might be attempted without Special Instruction but alas the Confederation. When Your Excellency comes to peruse that paper you will perceive that many Evil[s] may arise to Individuals before the Several States shall have concurred, even admitting, what I doubt, that all the States are disposed to concur in a general Confederation. The day for that event does not Seem to be at hand. I think in many parts we have improved after too long debating the original plan much for the worse. By the next opportunity I will transmit all that we shall then have agreed to.

Under this Cover you will find Copy of Mr. Duche's infamous Letter to General Washington. As it has been thought improper by Congress to publish it Your Excellency will not suffer a publication to be made from the Copy I send. I request you to let General Howe & Mr. Gervais see it.

The News of the day is great & valuable. I will endeavour to collect the Substance & put a half sheet containing it within this. I congratulate with your Excellency on these great events, God grant we may improve them into foundations for establishing an honourable & lasting peace. I am fatigued by apprehensions of being any further obliged to the French, rejoiced that we are hitherto so little. As it may now be said we have thrown Sixes upon which we have been, tacitly promised the friendship of all Europe I hope our Antagonist will draw the Game.

No Man is more determined to persevere to the end at all hazards than I am yet the State of our Army, of our finances & above all the management & disposal of our funds furnish arguments sufficient to induce every thinking Man devoutly to wish for peace & opportunity for recollection but some there are in & not in the Field who pray for a long & moderate War. I am with the most perfect Esteem.

27th. This was ready for the Express last Night but I waited expecting the Court of Appeals would have Issued a Citation to answer to Capt Arthurs Appeal & shew Cause but Mr. Lewis informs me it will not be done or not immediately & he has agreed the 40 days shall commence tomorrow.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> For information on the case of *Weyman v. Arthur*, see Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, October 18, 1777, note 4.



## Marine Committee to the Eastern Navy Board

Gentlemen

York October 26th 1777

Your several letters of the 3d & 9th of September and of October 11th have come to hand, but the removal of Congress & the necessary attendance to other very important matters has hitherto prevented an attention to them. You are doubtless to have a general superintendence over the Agents for building the Continental Ships, as well as to furnish them with such articles as you shall judge Necessary, but as they were constituted Agents before your appointment, they are to continue their more immediate attention to that business. We enclose you a resolution of Congress empowering any two of your Board to act in the absence of the third;<sup>1</sup> but it is the expectation that this will happen as seldom as possible. Enclosed you also have two Warrants One upon the Loan Office of Massachusetts Bay for 50,000 Dollars, and the other for the like sum upon the Loan office of Rhode Island. You are sensible of the great call for money from every quarter. The drafts upon these Loan offices have lately been large as well as upon every other.

Should there not be money sufficient for the immediate payment of the whole of these sums, yet we apprehend the whole will not immediately be wanted, and you'll draw only as you want, that other drafts may stand an equal chance, where the monies are as much or more wanted—doubtless you'll be able to satisfy some demands with the loan office Certificates which these Warrants will enable you to procure, and which we recommend always to be attended to when it can be done. We also inclose you a resolution of Congress making an additional allowance to your Clerk and giving you power to appoint another if absolutely necessary. The Navy Board however in this Department has but one. You will have inclosed a List of the several Ships names and their Commander and we have directed the Navy Board of this Department now sitting at Bordentown to send you a number of the printed resolutions of Congress. The getting the ships out of Providence River and the Ship Trumbull out of Connecticut River is a matter of great importance, and what Congress has much at heart; the procuring this with the hazard that may attend it, may be left to your prudence and the good conduct of their Commanders. We are sorry to find that a disaffection subsists between Captain McNeill and his Officers & Seamen. This Ship must be got to sea at all events. Captain McNeill writes us that he expects to be able to man her notwithstanding the obstructions and difficulties he meets with. But if you find he is unable to do this, you must appoint some other Commander to the Ship at least for the present Cruize in whom you can confide, and Captain McNeill must be otherwise provided for, more especially as an enquiry must be had (if not a Court Martial) upon the Conduct of the late Cruize, with Captain Manly, but which



its apprehended cannot be fairly done till captain Manly is exchanged.<sup>2</sup> Captain McNeill seems to think such a measure necessary. We think in justice to his Character, as well as to the public good, it is [so?]. You have inclosed a Resolution empowering you to suspend any Officer till the pleasure of Congress shall be known.<sup>3</sup> This power we doubt not will be exercised with proper prudence. By the words commander in Chief must since the suspension of Commodore Hopkins necessarily mean and intend the oldest Commander in Rank of the Continental Ships or Vessels of war in any One Port or Harbor. Or when Court Martials are necessary, the oldest Commander within your district that can be applied to. The procuring Iron & Flour we must leave to be done when absolutely necessary, by such means as would think prudent and proper under a like necessity acting for yourselves. Lead is not to be obtained here, but orders are sending to the Eastward for that article for the Army. We hear a very considerable quantity has lately arrived there, we think at Bedford, perhaps the whole may not be taken up. We have no immediate employ for Captain Tucker, but shall attend to the appointment of Commanders for the Ships building at Salsbury and Norwich. In the mean time you'll please to transmit us the names of such persons within your district as you can recommend for Captains and officers of them, paying attention to such as are at present in Commission but out of actual Service, informing us at the same time of their particular Merits and pretentions. Captain McNeill has already Instructions where his Ship is to proceed viz to France. A form of like Instructions is herewith enclosed, to be by you given to each of the Commanders of the Ships at Providence. We are Gentlemen, Your hble Servants

P.S. The Warrants for the Money are not enclosed but will be forwarded by the President of Congress.

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> This resolution and the increase in the clerk's allowance mentioned below were approved on October 23. *JCC*, 9:836-37.

<sup>2</sup> John Manley and his frigate *Hancock* had been taken by the enemy during a July engagement off Cape Sable, Nova Scotia. Suspicion that Hector McNeill, captain of the frigate *Boston*, had deserted Manley and thus had been responsible for the loss of the *Hancock*, coupled with evidence of mounting differences between McNeill and his officers, led the Marine Committee to recommend his suspension in their November 12 letter to the Eastern Navy Board. Before receiving this recommendation the Eastern Navy Board on November 25 requested a "court of enquiry" to investigate McNeill's conduct and his charges against three officers, and in compliance with the court's judgment the board suspended McNeill on December 27. "Votes & Resolutions of the Navy Board of the Eastern department," Continental Congress Collection, DLC. For a discussion of McNeill's differences with Manley and with his own officers, as well as the courts-martial held in June 1778 that exonerated Manley but ordered McNeill's dismissal, see William J. Morgan, *Captains to the Northward* (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishing Co., 1959), pp. 90-97, 146-48. For additional information on the Manley-McNeill conflict and a detailed account of the July naval engage-

ment that resulted in the *Hancock's* capture, see Philip Chadwick Foster Smith, *Fired by Manley Zeal* (Salem, Mass.: Peabody Museum, 1977).

<sup>3</sup> See JCC, 9:833.

## William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Octo 26 [1777]. Sab. Eveng.

Brown is detained by the President to wait on Him, as He is now in earnest returning home. This day Week We received Copy of the Albany Comtees Letter, giving an Acco of Burgoyne & whole Armys surrendering Prisoners of War, it gaind intire Credit, to the great Joy of Congress & the Friends of their Country, but scarce a Circumstance of Confirmation, from [that time?] till this, so that it was almost [. . .] believed, nor has Genl Gates [. . .]<sup>1</sup> but we hear a Col Wilkinson [. . .] with Dispatches from Him & the News seems confirmed past Contradiction. You have had it without doubt more perfectly. What infinite reason have We to bless & extol the name of the Lord of Hosts the God of Armys, for this great reverse of our Affairs in that quarter, since proud Burgoyne was able to say (at the shameful evacuation of Ty. &c) *Veni, Vidi, Vici*, which has been overruled for great Good, tho We then tho't with good old Jacob, all these things are against Us. O, may the Mercies & Judgments of the Almighty, accomplish the great Design for which They are sent, our Repentance & Reformation.

I doubt not Congress will appoint a Day of Thansgiving on this great Occasion, throout the Continent, & may God give Us Heart to celebrate it in a right & acceptable manner.

Our Forts & Vessels of [War] have in a surprizing & unexpected [manner] defended the Passage of the Delawar [. . .]<sup>2</sup> most engaged Efforts of the Enemy with [. . .]ly Fleet, their existence at the City depends upon their comandg the River, but their Attempts had hitherto faild & two of their Ships lost. The Cannonade mentioned before was real & ended happily as You will see by the inclosed Copys. Our officers there have deserved great Honor, & blessed be God, Who has inspired them with Courage & given Them so much Success.

Congress is so thin of Members that they<sup>3</sup>

RC (NH). A continuation of Williams to Trumbull, October 23, 1777.

<sup>1</sup> Three or four words missing.

<sup>2</sup> Approximately three words missing.

<sup>3</sup> Remainder of RC missing.

## Nathaniel Folsom to Meshech Weare

Dear Sir

York Town 27th Octob. 1777

We are yet in possession of the River Delaware, Fort Mifflin & the Fort oposite to it at Red Bank. The Enemy have made repeated attacks upon the Forts in the course of the last week but were always repulsed with great loss particularly the general attack which they made on the 22 & 23d Instant when they lost two Ships the Augusta of 64 Guns & the Liverpool of 28 both which they had warped through the lower row of Chevaux de frize but not being able to sustain the heavy fire from our Forts were forced to abandon them & blow them up. A Copy of a letter giving an account of this affair I inclose you.

Mr. Howe with his Army are in Philada. in great want of provision. Genl. Washington's main Army is at Germantown increasing in Number every day & we hourly expect to hear of another engagement. We have lately received Accounts from the northward of the Surrender of General Burgoyne & all his Army to our victorious General Gates the particulars of which have not yet come to hand.

Inclosed I send you a Copy of the Articles of Confederation as far as agreed to by Congress. The 9th Article is "that the proportion of the public expence incurred by the United States for their Common defense & general welfare to be paid by each State into the Treasury be ascertained by the value of all land within each State granted to, or Surveyed for, any person as such land & the buildings and Improvements thereon shall be estimated according to such mode as Congress shall from time to time direct." This Article was opposed by all the New England Delegates & we are yet in hopes of having it reconsidered.<sup>1</sup>

I have also inclosed you a letter from Major Ward giving an Account of an attack on Fort Red Bank & the defeat of the Enemy there. I am with respect, Your most obedient & very Hble servant,

Nathl. Folsom

RC (Nh-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> No substantial changes were made in this article, which ultimately became number eight of the articles finally approved on November 15 for submission to the states. The issue had been decided on October 14, five states in favor, four opposed, two divided, Delaware and Georgia not represented. See *JCC*, 9:801, 913-14.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

27th October [1777]

I had taken time by the forelock & intended this to have been a long & Sober Serious Letter but it must tho' Serious be Short & joyful.



Our Fleet & Fort on & in the Delaware have repelled one grand attack of the Enemy on all Sides by Land & Water, the particulars I have Sent to the president who will shew them to you.<sup>1</sup> You may also depend upon it Colo. Wilkinson Adj. General is on his way hither with particular advice of the Surrender of General Burgoyne's Army. This & that are throwing Sixes. Colo John Laurens's Letter of the 24th within will shew you his Ideas of affairs in the Circle of Philadelphia. I Send this Express on a Special occasion, he will wait not more than 48 hours in Charles Town, let me hear from you if possible & begin now to write about Crops & Markets, in 2 or 3 days you will be further troubled, at present My Compliments to Mrs. Gervais & all freinds & Adieu.

I have requested the president to give you the perusal of Mr. Duches infamous Letter.<sup>2</sup>

LB (SchH). A continuation of Laurens to Gervais, October 22, 1777.

<sup>1</sup> Laurens must have sent these "particulars" in an enclosure to his October 26 letter to President John Rutledge of South Carolina.

<sup>2</sup> On October 30 Laurens wrote another brief letter to Gervais, introducing "Mr Riddle of Baltimore" who was going to Charlestown to transact "business in the Commercial branch." Laurens Papers, SchH.

## Robert Morris to John Bradford

Dear Sir, Manheim in Pensylvania October 27th. 1777

I wrote you fully the 6th Inst.<sup>1</sup> and have since received your favours of the 18th, & 24th Sepr. & 2d October to which shall reply. I observe you had drawn two bills on me in favour of Cap Nathl. Lewis one for £2400 & the other for £2560, making together Four thousand nine hundred & Sixty pounds Lawfull Money. They shall be punctually paid when they appear & this transaction will make a material alteration in our Accounts as I had not only remitted you a draft on the Loan office for 8000 Dollars but also ordered Mr Langdon to remit you Loan office Certificates for 4000 & you had before 4000 Dollrs in Loan Office Certificates, also the draft on Mr Warren which I expect he will pay.<sup>2</sup> These Funds being now unnecessary for the accomodation of Capt. Lewis you will please to retain the Loan Office Certificates for my Account & hold the 8000 Dollars & remaining balance of my Account Subject to such orders as I may hereafter give respecting the same.

You will observe by my former letters all I had to say respecting the Goods you have received by the dispatch Cap Cleaveland & sorry I am to find that Captain Cleavland has no Invoice & is so much unacquainted with their Contents, however I hope we shall be able to find out who they belong to upon the receipt of those returns. The Commercial Committee requested you to make of the Marks, Num-



bers & Contents of every Package and soon as they are ascertained you shall have proper instructions.

Pray dont call Cunninghams Privateer mine, she is not under my direction and I have but 1/25th share in the property. I entirely disapprove of his Conduct in Seizing any property not authorized by Resolutions of Congress and shall take measures for Securing Justice to the Portuguese Owners of that Snow he has sent in. I congratulate you most sincerely on the great success of Genl Gates. It has filled our Hearts with gladness and we have hopes that the army under Genl. Washington will before long participate in the Laurels our Enemies loose.

I observe that Prizes are beginning to drop into your Ports and am pleased to find the Continental Cruizers concerned in some of them, perhaps you or Mr. Jarvis may meet an opportunity to purchase such another Brig as the Delaware on equally reasonable terms. If you can, as you will now have Funds of mine on hand, I wish you wou'd and in order to give a good chance for such a purchase I will not Confine your Views to a Brig but hereby empower you to buy for any Account either at Boston or any port in the four New England States from whence you think there will be a good chance of getting to Sea, a Ship, Snow, Brig, Schooner or Sloop of the value of £1000 to £1200 Lawfull Money. I wou'd have her a good Vessell & fast Sailer if possible, fitted at least sufficiently for her intended Voyage and I depend on you & those you may employ at other Ports to see that I do not pay too dear in the purchase and outfit. If such a purchase takes place get a good carefull honest Master firmly attached to our Cause & as many American Seamen as may be necessary and dispatch her soon as possible for Georgia to address of John Wereat Esqr. Continental Agent there. Writing him a few lines advising that she is my property and that I send her to him for a Cargo of Rice which he is to put onboard & Consign the same to Mr. Andrew Limozin Mercht. at Havre de Grace on my Account & the sooner he dispatches her the better. I shall write him on this Subject but the distance is great and Conveyances not frequent therefore I wish you to mention my intentions in the Voyage least my letters miscarry or meet delay.

Since I have been obliged to leave Philadelphia I find my attendance in Congress extreamly inconvenient & detrimental to my own affairs and as I have for near three years past given up 9/10th of my time to the Public I intended to make application to our New Assembly to leave me out of the Delegation.<sup>3</sup> Therefore request you will send your accounts with the Secret Committee as I wish to settle those accounts before I quit. Our Worthy President Mr Hancock has taken leave of Congress & you will have the pleasure of his Company untill Jany next when I hope he will return and again fill that chair which he has so long held with infinite honor to himself & advantage to the Public. I am Dr sir Your affectionate Friend & Obed hble servt,

Robt Morris

RC (McHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> Morris had written the following letter to John Langdon on October 6 from his country seat at Manheim. "You will have heard before this reaches you of the unhappy fate of poor Philadelphia; it is a subject I can hardly bear to think of and I must avoid writing on it. I find my friend John Bradford Esq will be under a considerable advance of money for me and as I cannot do the business I wished in your port must now request you will send to Mr Bradford the Loan Office certificates for 4000 dollars which I sent you in March last. He will convert them into cash for his reimbursement and will credit me for the interest due thereon. I have some thoughts of sending waggons for the sugars &c.; shall send you some bar iron and flour by them. I shall also want shipping this winter and beg you will keep me advised. My family are here but I shall be mostly at York 20 miles distant attending Congress. My compliments to Col Whipple. I will write to him by and by and more at large to you when I have more time." Alfred L. Elwyn Papers, DLC.

The same collection also contains the following letter to Langdon, which bears the place and dateline "Manheim in Pennsylvania, October 27th 1777." "I have your favor of the 22d Sept with the copy of Messrs Hunter's draft and the receipt of those you paid the money to; the amount is at your credit.

"I want to see Mr Nesbitt before I despatch waggons for the sugars &c. He is now at Trenton waiting to return into Philadelphia and the news I have this moment rec'd from thence gives me the strongest hopes that he will not have to wait long, for our defences on the Delaware turn out beyond all expectation. The enemy have been repeatedly repulsed and have now lost some of their capital ships. In short I have hopes to send you from thence a fast sailing schooner instead of waggons respecting which, I will write you again very soon and in the mean time you must hold the sugars subject to my future orders."

<sup>3</sup> As Morris explained in a brief letter to "Mr. William Patterson, Mercht. in St. Eustatia," which he wrote from his home at Manheim on October 31: "I am in hopes of soon returning to Philadelphia & renewing with Fresh Vigour all Mercantile operations." Patterson Papers, MdHi.

## Robert Morris to John Rowe

Sir, Manheim Octobr. 27th. 1777

It is now a Week since I received your favour of the 29th Sept.<sup>1</sup> continued to the first Inst on the road from York Town to this place where my Family now reside. I then desired Mr. Coleman to continue his Journey to York & gave him back the Letters requesting he would deliver them to Mr. Hancock with my Compts, & that I desired he would read them to Congress in order that they might be prepared against my return when I should bring this Matter before them in form as a piece of business, Accordingly I returned to York last Week but found Congress so closely pursuing business of Importance that I did not think it right to interrupt it & as Mr. Coleman seems impatient at the Delay I have concluded to dispatch him with my own Sentiments relative to the Portuguese Snow & trust to some other conveyance to hand you any determinations of Congress relative to that affair. I can not help thinking that Captn. Cunninghame's conduct in seizing this Snow if she is really & truly Portuguese property is extremely reprehensible for I do not believe that Mr.

Braxton cou'd or wou'd give him orders to capture such property at a time when no Resolves of Congress authorized it but even if he has such orders, those who gave them are much to blame & I do suppose the Transaction will appear in this light to all the World.<sup>2</sup> However as the Vessell & Cargo are sent in I suppose there must be a Tryal in the Admiralty Court because the Crew of the Privateer wou'd not be content that the Owners shou'd dismiss her without Trial neither have they a right or Authority to do so that I know off. I hope however for the sake of Justice & for the Honour of the United States of America that a righteous Judgement may be pronounced on her, & that she will not be condemned as prize unless upon the Trial Circumstances turn up to prove her Justly, fairly, & equitably within the True Intent & Meaning of those Laws of Congress which describe what shall be deemed Lawfull Prize. I should be truly sorry if any hard strained Constrictions or political distinctions and considerations should procure a Condemnation, & to prove to you Sir how much I am in earnest I do solemnly declare that I will not as a part Owner receive any part of or benefit from this Capture unless circumstances turn up to prove her what I have said above. I do not expect it will be the case but suppose she will be acquitted & ordered to be restored the former Owners & shall propose to Congress that they should interfere in the business & if that happens the Capt'n. of the Snow & some of his People being sent away she can not be restored to him & shou'd the Owners of the Phoenix be ordered to restore her they must run great risque in Attempting to do it for I apprehend they should put an American Master onboard & send her to Tryall with proper certificates from the Admiralty Court the Commander of British Cruizers woud pay no regard to such proceedings. They woud consider her as a Prize under the Act of Parliament & as such woud proceed against & condemn her. The Owners of the Phoenix would then be exposed to future Lawsuits & damages by the prosecution of the Portuguese Owners—should the Owners of the Phoenix proceed to sell Vessell & Cargo for Account of the former Owners where shall the property center untill they can remit it to Portugal? It must not be divided amongst them & with whom shall they trust it so that all may be satisfied, I know not. My design is therefore to propose that Congress shall order Vessell & Cargo to be sold & the proceeds be vested in the Publick Funds bearing Interest for the Benefit of the Proprietors, that our Commissioners at the Court of France inform the Court of Portugal of this Transaction & grant Passports to the Owners of this Snow to send one or more Vessells to any Port or Ports in these United States with Publick Assurance that the Net Proceeds will be immediately paid to them or their Atty. or Agent & that leave will be granted to purchase therewith such produce of this Country as they chuse & leave to carry it away in their Vessells. This will put it in the Owners power to make good Fortune out of lead. They will



have their property restored in a Way that will amply recompence any disappointments they have experienced by the seizure of it & if the Court of Portugal procure Passports from Britain they will do this with perfect security. This idea I have communicated to some of my Colleagues in Congress & it meets the Approbation of all I have mentioned it to, under [this] Idea then I give you my opinion that the Vessell & Cargo shou'd be tryed by the Admiralty Court if she is there condemned I have nothing further to say (only to judge for myself here after whether she is a prize that I can with a safe conscience benefit from or not) but if she is Acquitted & ordered to be restored to the former Owners, that you shoud then cause her to be taken good care of, either by authority of the State, of the Court, or of your own authority as Agent for the Owners which ever may be judged most proper & no Plunder or Embezzlement take place but inform me instantly by Express or otherways of the Acquittal I will instantly bring the Matter to a determination & transmit you back their resolutions with full Orders for what is then to be done. I have no opportunity of consulting Mr. Braxton or any other Owners of the Phoenix respecting this business therefore I do not presume to give any Directions for your proceedings in case of Condemnation my whole care is to guard them from any Ill Consequences that might arise to them from Injustice or Ill Management in case of Acquittal & to preserve to the former Owners their property with a Secure Mode of recovering it in all which I presume I shall have the Approbation of all good Men. I am expecting from you a Translation of the Papers found onboard the Snow & remain, Sir, Your Obedt. hble Servt.

Robt Morris

Tr (DNA: PCC, item 44).

<sup>1</sup> Rowe's September 29 letter to Morris is in PCC, item 44, fols. 23-26.

<sup>2</sup> The illegal seizure of the Portuguese snow *Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Anthony* by the schooner *Phoenix*, Capt. Joseph Cunningham, precipitated a celebrated maritime case that had important international implications and involved Congress intermittently for nearly three years. Acting in behalf of the owners of the *Phoenix*, Morris (who had a 1/24 investment in the vessel) formally laid the case before Congress the following March when he presented a memorial arguing that the nation's honor was at stake and attempting to have the authority of Congress interposed between the *Phoenix's* owners and those of the Portuguese snow. Morris' perception of the issues latent in the case and the difficulties that were likely to arise from Cunningham's seizure is clearly reflected in this letter. Rowe, as agent for the *Phoenix*, had solicited Morris' advice on the case that he was preparing for the prize court in Massachusetts where the seized vessel had been condemned.

For a discussion of the case of the *Phoenix* in the context of Congress' experience with prize appeals, see Henry J. Bourguignon, *The First Federal Court: The Federal Appellate Prize Court of the American Revolution, 1775-1787*, *Memoirs of the American Philosophical Society* 122 (1977), pp. 96-97. The basic documents pertaining to the case are in PCC, item 44, fols. 1-185. For congressional comment when Morris' memorial came before Congress the following March, see Henry Laurens to Samuel Adams, March 7, 1778.



## John Adams to Abigail Adams

My dearest Friend

York Town, Octr. 28. 1777

We have been three days, soaking and poaching in the heaviest Rain, that has been known for several Years, and what adds to the Gloom is the Uncertainty in which We remain to this Moment, concerning the Fate of Gates and Burgoigne. We are out of Patience. It is impossible to bear this suspense, with any Temper.

I am in comfortable Lodgings, which is a Felicity that has fallen to the Lott of a very few of our Members. Yet the House where I am is so thronged, that I cannot enjoy such Accommodations as I wish. I cannot have a Room as I used, and therefore cannot find Opportunities to write as I once did.

The People of this Country, are chiefly Germans, who have Schools in their own Language, as well as Prayers, Psalms and Sermons, so that Multitudes are born, grow up and die here, without ever learning the English. In Politicks they are a breed of Mongrels or Neutrals, and benumbed with a general Torpor.

If the People, in Pensylvania, Maryland, Delaware and Jersy had the Feelings and the Spirit of some People that I know, Howe would be soon ensnared in a Trap, more fatal than that in which, as it is said, Burgoigne was taken.

Howe is compleatly in our Power, and if he is not totally ruined it will be entirely owing to the Aukwardness and indolence of this Country.

Fighting however, begins to become fashionable. Coll. Green has exhibited a glorious Example, in the Defence of Red bank. But this must be done by a New Englandman at the Head of two N. England Regiments, Rhode Islanders.

Coll. Smith however, is a Marylander, from Baltimore. He has shewn another Example of Magnanimity, which gives me the most agreeable Hopes. Commodore Hazelwood too, has behaved in a manner that exceeds all Praise. This Spirit will be caught by other Officers, for Bravery is epidemical and contagious as the Plague.

This Army suffers much for Want of Blanketts and Shoes.

I celebrated the 25th of this Month, in my own Mind and Heart, much more than I shall the 30th—because I think the first a more fortunate day than the last.<sup>1</sup>

My Duty to your Father and my Mother—to Unkles and Aunts. Love to Brothers and sisters—but above all, present all the affection that Words can express to our dear Babes.

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:361–62.

<sup>1</sup> The 25th was John and Abigail's wedding anniversary and the 30th was his birthday. *Ibid.*, p. 362n.1.

## Elbridge Gerry to James Warren

My dear sir

York Town in Pennsylvania Octr. 28. 1777

Since my last of the 6th Instant, I am favoured with yours of Sepr 8th, & havg previously wrote to You on the Subject thereof, hope You have e'er this recd my Letter, together with the Orders & Remittance which the Commercial Committee were directed to transmit to You.

The Remarkable Success of our arms in the North, calls for our immediate & most grateful Acknowledgmts to the Sovereign Dispenser of every Event, & if properly improved, may speedily terminate in the Quietus or Removal of those Instruments of Tyranny wch. now infest the western World. Advices were yesterday received by Congress, from our Gallies & Forts in & upon the River Delaware, which must give You Pleasure. On the 21st Inst. the Enemy crossed at Cooper's Ferry (in Philadelphia) with 1200 Germans under the Command of Count Dunop, & marched thro a small Part of the Jersies to red Bank, a Post of ours on the Banks of the Delaware. They arrived within 1/4 of a Mile of the Fort the 22d at 12 oClock At Noon, & at 1 sent a Flag to demand a Surrender. Colo Green (of Rhode Island) who was ordered there by General Washington, with part of his Batalion, & had the Command, refused to Surrender; & We are informed, that in Order to induce the Enemy to an Escalade, he secreted from the Officer who came with the Flag, all his Men excepting fifty, & informed him, "that With those brave Fellers he intended to make the Fort his Tomb." The Enemy immediately began a brisk Cannonade, & at 3/4 after 4 marched in two Columns to storm it, but after passing the Abatis, & gaining the Ditch they were so warmly received as to be obliged to a precipitate Retreat, leaving behind Count Dunop & his Brigade Major, both Wounded, 78 killed, & 70 Wounded prisoners, amongst the former of which was a Lieutenant Colonel, & several other officers. 300 Arms were found near the Fort, part of which it is supposed were left by such of the Wounded as escaped, who according to the Number of killed, must have been equall to all the killed & wounded left in the Field. The Enemy We are informed did not recover their Fright untill they had recrossed the Ferry & joyned their main Army. In the morning of the 23d three bomb Bataries were opened at Day break on Fort Mifflin, & 6 Ships of War having the preceding Night warped thro the lower Chiveaux de Frize, were brot against the Fort abt 7 in the Morning. The Cannonade was kept up on both Sides very warmly, untill 12 at Noon, when it was found convenient by the Enemy to remove their Ships, in doing wch. they were so well served by the Gallies that one of their 60 Gun Ships & 20 Gun Frigates were run on Shore & afterwards burnt by their own people, who were obliged to quit them. Those that escaped were ordered down the River, & by the last advices the Garrisons were unmolested & in high Spirits. Thus may I congratulate You

on some happy events of the South which 'tho small when compared with those from the other Quarters will serve to increase the Reputation of the Arms of the United States.

I am in Hopes that You will receive the plan of Confederacy before the first of December, as Congress are very industrious in completing it. A Report is now before Congress for a large continental Tax, confiscating & making Sale of tory Estates & appropriating the same to support the War, but for the Benefit of the respective States, & for sinking all the Currency of the several States.<sup>1</sup> Nothing new from abroad. Congress have lately made a Major General of the Baron de Kalb, who is said to be an exceeding good officer. I hope that the Assembly will vigorously carry into Execution the Plan lately recommended for recruiting the Army & apprehending Deserters; & that the Shoes, Hose & Blankets required will be sent with the utmost Expedition to General Washington's army, which is in great Want thereof. Not a Line from General Gates relative to the Captivity of General Burgoyne & his Army, wch gives Reason to conclude that the Express is intercepted. I remain sir in great Haste Yours Sincerely,

E Gerry

P.S. Pray order a sufficient Number of Charged Bombs, & battering Cannon to be in Readiness for attacking New York; as I presume this cannot be omitted, & these Articles may be wanted.

Octr 29th. I have just recd your Favour of Octr 5th,<sup>2</sup> the Letter wch. You wrote relative to the Wants of the Navy came to Hand but a few Days since, altho dated the 8th Sepr.; but I hope that You will soon have fresh Supplies of Cloathing &c for the United States, & be able to obtain what is wanted for the Navy. The Army nevertheless must be first supplied. The paragraph relative to the "remarkable Success" which I mentioned in the Beginning of the Letter, was grounded on Information recd from Governor Clinton that General Burgoyne & his whole army had surrendered to General Gates. He recd it from the Chairman or President of the N York Convention & sent to Congress a Copy of a Letter from the Chairman of the Committee of Albany to the president aforesaid; wch put the Matter so far beyond Doubt, that it was universally beleived to be true, but it is now 10 Days since the Advices first came, & no Confirmation of it from General Gates, which induces us to beleive, that it was a Deception in order to prevent Genl Clinton from attempting to Joyn G. Burgoyne, in Consequence of this Intelligence, the proposition was made for providing *Bombs Cannonade*, which had it been true might have been wanted soon.

The Loss of the Enemy at German Town has not been yet ascertained. General Agnew was killed & a Number of other officers of Distinction & all the Hospitals in the City taken up for the Wounded. This We have from a Lady who left the City after the Battle who is



to be depended on, & by the best information to be had the Number of their killed & wounded is abt 1500. We daily expect to hear important advices from the northern & eastern Departmts., & hope they will be favourable.

RC (ICarbS; Elsie O. and Philip D. Sang deposit, 1971).

<sup>1</sup> Gerry is referring to the report of the committee appointed to consider the proceedings of the August 1777 New England convention, which was read in Congress on October 27. Congress did not begin acting on the report until November 22. See *JCC*, 8:650, 731, 9:841, 899, 953-58, 968-71. See also Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke, August 18, note 2; and Gerry to Robert Treat Paine, October 29, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Warren's October 5 letter to Gerry is in Gardiner, *Warren-Gerry Correspondence*, pp. 83-85.

## Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry

Dear Sir,

York in Pennsylv. Octr. 28. 1777

The anxiety at Williamsburg cannot be greater than it is here to have a particular account of our late glorious success in the North. For nine days past, we have hourly expected the arrival of a Messenger with Gates's Magnificent Inventory, and in order to a quick transmission of it, we have detained, and still keep Colo. Masons Express. We now learn that Colo. Wilkinson D. Adjutant Gen. is on his way with this long wisht for Capitulation by which Gen. Burgoyne and his Army have surrendered themselves prisoners of war. Until I can furnish you the authentic detail, I will entertain you with the relation of our late success on the Delaware below Philadelphia. It must be obvious to you how important to the enemy it is, that they shd. get their fleet up to the City, for this purpose they have made many efforts which have been repulsed with considerable injury to their Ships, and loss of Men. The last attempt was the most powerful and was as follows—With 1200 Hessian Grenadiers led by Colo. Count Donop they attack'd Red Bank, a post held by a party of Troops under Colo. Green of Rhode Island, nearly opposite to Fort Island on the Jersey Shore. The attack was made by Storm, and they had passed the Abbatis, gained the Ditch, and some of them, with Donop & his Aid Major at their head, had passed the Pickets, when they met so warm a reception as to be driven back and forced to retire with great precipitation, leaving the Count and his Aid with 70 wounded in our hands, and upwards of 70 dead on the spot. 300 muskets with swords &c. &c. are taken, one Lieut. Colo. & some inferior Officers of the enemy are among the slain. The routed party returned to Philadelphia, crossing Delaware opposite the City. An attack was likewise made on Fort Mifflin by several Ships of War and by the Batteries on Province Island, which was continued long and with great violence. At length the Ships retired and two of them getting a ground (a 64 &



a 20) were quitted by the people after having set fire to them. They blew up with a terrible explosion. Thus the enemy were defeated and disappointed in this general attack. Whether they will renew their attempts I cannot tell, but it is probable they will. That you may have a better idea of this important passage I have inclosed you a draught made by Capt. Loyeauté of Gen. Coudrays Corps of Artillerists, the same Gentleman whom we have recommended for the Command of our Batn. of Artillery.<sup>1</sup> He is an Artist in the business of Artillery and not unacquainted with the art of the Engineer, and will most assuredly benefit our Country much in this necessary department. I pray you Sir to interest yourself in procuring the appointment of this Gentleman. At all events it is proper that an answer be speedily sent here that the Gentleman may not be unnecessarily delayed. There has been pains taken to get this Officer in other States, but we have prevailed with him to give Virginia the preference. The United States have a very considerable quantity of field Artillery at present, 30 pieces of which are laying idle at Charles Town in S. Carolina. Suppose Virginia was to direct their Delegates to apply to Congress for 6 or 8 of these pieces<sup>2</sup> & if they are granted to us, let them be brought to our Country, where for the present they may serve to instruct the Men with, and be ready for use next Campaign if we should be visited, which I very much incline to think will be the case, since the enemy have been so baffled in the North as must, I think, discourage future efforts in that quarter. Capt. Loyeauté is of opinion that it would be quite proper to have that number of Field pieces at the least, for the purpose of instruction, as well as for use in war. There are so many places in our Country that require to be fortified, and the use of Artillery is become so very important in war, that I think we cannot be too well and too soon acquainted with this branch of the Art of War. These Officers of Gen Coudrays Corps have only leave of absence from the Court of France for 2 years, and I think it will be very unwise in America not to profit from this circumstance so as to acquire knowledge of a necessary Art which they understand so well, and which we are quite ignorant of. Monsr. Loyeaute speaks English pretty well, and improves daily.<sup>3</sup> The impatience of the Express will not suffer him to remain here any longer, and therefore we are not able to confirm the Northern News. This is the first moment of fair weather since Sunday morning, it having been constant and heavy rain for 4 days and nights past, which has prevented all intercourse with the Army or from the North. We shall send an Express to you immediately on receiving an authentic account from Gen. Gates, which I hope will be the case in a short time.

I am dear Sir most affectionately yours,

Richard Henry Lee.

Octr. 30th. 1777. 10 oClock in the morning.

RC (MeHi).

<sup>1</sup>See Lee to Henry, October 8, 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup>Lee repeated this suggestion in his January 7, 1778, letter to Henry. See also *JCC*, 9:1069; and Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:140-43.

<sup>3</sup>Lee probably wrote the remainder of this letter on October 30, a conclusion suggested by Lee's comments on the "impatience of the Express" and the "weather since Sunday morning," as well as by the date and time line he appended after his signature.

## Samuel Adams to James Warren

My dear sir

York Town Pennsylvla Oct. 29 1777

I sent you a few days ago an Account of the Success we have had on the Delaware. The Honor of recovering Philadelphia seems to be intended for the brave Men who command there; for if the Enemy cannot get up with their Ships of War, Howe cannot long remain in the City. May Honor be given to whom Honor may be due.

Congress have applyd with Diligence to Confederation. Most of the important Articles are agreed to. Each State retains its Sovereignty and Independence with every Power, Jurisdiction and Right which is not by the Confederation expressly delegated to the United States in Congress assembled.

Each State is to have one Vote in Congress; but there must be a Concurrence of Nine States in all Matters of Importance.

The Proportion of the publick Expence to be paid by Each State to be ascertained by the Value of all the Lands granted to or surveyd for any Person, to be estimated according to such Mode as Congress shall from time to time direct.

All Disputes about Boundaries are to be decided by Judges appointed in the following Mode: The Representatives of Each State in Congress to be nominated, the contending States to strike off 13 Each and out of the remaining 13 not more than 9 nor less than 7 shall be drawn out by Lot, any five of them to hear & determine the Matter.

I hope we shall finish the Confederation in a few days when I intend to renew my Request for the Leave of Absence, and return home.<sup>1</sup> I am determined by Gods Assistance never to forsake the great Cause in which my Country is virtuously struggling; but there are others who have greater Abilities & more adequate to *this* important Service, than I have. I hope therefore another will be appointed in my Room. It is the greatest Honor of my Life to have enjoyd the Confidence of my Country thus long; and I have the clear and full Testimony of my own Mind that I have at all Times endeavord to fill the Station they have thought fit to place me in to their Advantage.

This will be deliverd to you by Mr. Hancock who has Leave of Absence till the first of January next.<sup>2</sup>

I hope the Person to be elected in my Room will have understand-

ing enough to know when the Arts of Flattery are playd upon him, and Fortitude of mind sufficient to resist & despise them. This I mention *inter Nosmetipsos*. In this evil World there are oftentimes large Doses prepared for those whose Stomacks will bear them. And it would be a disgrace to human Nature to affirm there are some who can take the fullest Cup without nauseating.

I suppose you have by this time finishd a form of Government. I hope the greatest Care will be taken in the Choice of a Governor. He, whether a wise Man or a Fool, will in a great Measure form the Morals & Manners of the People. I beg Pardon for hinting the Possibility of one of the last Character being chosen; But alas! Is there not such a Possibility! But I assure my self of better things. I believe my Country will fix their Eyes and their Choice on a Man of Religion and Piety; who will understand human Nature and the Nature and End of political Society—who will not by Corruption or Flattery be seduced to the betraying, even without being sensible of it himself, the sacred Rights of his Country.

We are told that the Prisoners taken at the Northward are sent into Massachusetts Bay. I hope Burgoyne will not be permitted to reside in Boston; for if he is, I fear that inconsiderate Persons of Fashion and some significance will be inducd, under the Idea of Politeness, to form Connexions with him, dangerous to the Publick. There are other Reasons which I should think would make his or any other officers being fixed in a populous Town uneligible. There are Prison ships I suppose provided for the Privates.

The Success of the present Campain hitherto has been great beyond our most sanguine Expectation. Let us ascribe Glory to God who has graciously vouchsafd to favor the Cause of America and of Mankind. We are impatiently waiting to hear from Rhode Island. Should we succeed in every Quarter, yet we must not slack our Hands. Every Nerve must be exerted in preparing for another Campain; for we may be attackd the next Spring with redoubled Vigor.

There is Nothing in my opinion so threatenng to us as our depreciating Currency. Among the Train of Evils it is likely to bring upon us, is the Destruction of Morals; for many will be ready to think Extortion and Injustice necessary and justifiable for their own Security. I am much pleasd to hear that the People of our State are loudly calling for & the Assembly is about to lay on a heavy Tax. This, if punctually collected, will be an effectual Remedy. I hope the Payment of the Interest on Money borrowd, in Bills on France, will bring large Sums into our Loan offices. But I am come to a Necessity of concluding. Adieu my dear Friend.

S A

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Adams was granted a leave of absence on November 7. *JCC*, 9:880.

<sup>2</sup> President Hancock had requested a "leave of absence of two months." *JCC*, 9:852.



## Elbridge Gerry to Robert Treat Paine

My dear sir

York Town in Pennsylvania Octr 29. 1777

Soon after the Receipt of your agreeable Favour of April 12th,<sup>1</sup> I was under the *Necessity* of suspending a Correspondence with all my Friends, which I think would not have been the Case, had my Situation been on the Banks of a River, blessed with the finest of Air, & abounding with the most delicate Species of the *finny* Creation.<sup>2</sup> This Part of my Epistle I think you will be able to *decypher* without an *Alphabet*.

I am informed that You was a warm advocate for the regulating Act, & had I been honored with a Seat in your House, You would certainly have had an Addition of one to your *Sect*. True it is, that an Excess of Money whether in Specie or Bills of Credit, will lessen the comparative Value, & that this will appear by enhanced prices, but is equally true, that while the Spirit of Commerce exists in a State, it will be found expedient if not indispensibly necessary, to limit the prices of those Articles of Trade which are considered as Necessaries of Life, when a great & lasting Scarcity takes Place; notwithstanding the quantity of Money should not exceed, or be even equal to, the Sum required in the State, for a circulating Medium. Therefore the Reduction of the Quantity, & restraining Acts must go hand in Hand, or the purpose in my humble Opinion, of supporting the Credit of the Currency, will never be answered. I have the Misfortune to be on the Committee upon the proceedings of your late Convention, & a Report is now before Congress for sinking the Currency of each State, taxing the Continent largely, & confiscating the Estates of fugitives, & others who have forfeited the Protection of the several States, for the Benefit of such States, but providing by Recommendation that such Estates should be sold & invested in Loan office Certificates of the Continent. The Committee will I hope in the next place propose a plan of general Regulation of prices from the Want of wch. your Act was before defeated.<sup>3</sup> I have long expected to have seen a Duty layed by your State for the Benefit thereof on prize Goods of at least 5 per Cent; It would give me pleasure to hear of it tomorrow; it is justified & encouraged by the Confederacy as adopted by Congress. The Late Resolve for paying Interest, will, I think, bring in large Sums to the Loan offices; the Encouragement is great & the Lender will be benefited in proportion to the Appreciation or Depreciation of the Currency.

As the president will deliver this, it is unnecessary to give a Detail of Congress Matters, wch You will receive from him by Whole sale. I congratulate You on the late Successes of our Troops in the North, & the Delaware & remain with much Esteem Sr. yours sincerely,

E Gerry



P.S. I am now in the Lobby & Congress are upon a question relative to a Council of State wch so hurries me as to prevent reading, much less adding to this.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> The substance of this paragraph suggests that Gerry was referring to a letter Paine probably had written in August.

<sup>2</sup> That is, if Congress had not been forced to flee Philadelphia.

<sup>3</sup> For additional information on Congress' action on the report of the proceedings of the New England convention at Springfield, Mass., see Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke, August 18, note 2; and Gerry to James Warren, October 28, 1777, note 1.

## Samuel Adams to James Warren

My dear sir

York Town Octob 30 1777

I have just receivd your agreeable Letter of the 8th by the Post, for which please to accept my hearty thanks. I had written and seald the inclosd Letter, before yours came to my Hand. Yesterday Morning Mr. H. who had several times before given Notice to Congress of his Intention to return to Boston agreeable to Leave he had obtaind at Philadelphia, made a formal Speech to Congress in which he reminded them of his having served them as President more than two years; whether he had conducted to their Approbation or not, was left to them; but he had the Testimony of his own Mind that he had done it to the best of his Ability. He thanked them for the Civility they had shown him, and if in the Course of Business he had faild in due Respect to any Member, as it was not intentional, he hoped it would be overlookd. It is likely as I have taken it from Memory upon hearing it once read, that I have not done it Justice in point of Expression. But it is not improbable that you may have a Copy of it; for a Motion was made in the Afternoon by Mr D—— of N.Y.<sup>1</sup> that a Copy should be requested, and Thanks returnd for his great Services, & a Request that he would return and take the Chair. This Motion was opposd by several Members, but it obtaind so far as to request the Copy, & this Day the latter Part of the Motion will be considerd.

I have given you this merely as a Peice of News, leaving you to judge of the Tendency & probable Effect of the Speech and Motion. We have had two Presidents before, Neither of whom made a parting Speech or receivd the Thanks of Congress.

RC (MHi). In Adams' hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> Both James Duane and William Duer were attending Congress at this time.

## Nathaniel Folsom to Josiah Bartlett

Dear Sir.

York town Octr. the 30th. 1777

Yesterday I inclosed and diracted to your President all the news I Could Pick up In this Quarter, Which you will have the Redeing off as soone as it Comes to hand.<sup>1</sup> I inclose you a Coppey of a letter from the Revt. Mr. Ducha to General Washington that you may see what a Judas wase a Chaplin to Congress.<sup>2</sup> Wood not have you make it Publick unless it be by advice of Councile, as Congress have not thought fit to Publish it here—tho it is Publick enough in every-bodeys mouth In the Streets.

My Duty is Very hard, and if you have any Comepashon left for me hope you will Joyne Congress Soone, as the buisness is too much for me to live [with]. Our President leves Congress this morning and I beleve Coll. Larence of South Carolinah will be appinted in his Place. I am Sr with grate Respect your most obedient., Humle. Sert.

Nathel. Folsom

P.S. My Compliments to the Honle. Board.

RC (NhD).

<sup>1</sup> Apparently a reference to Folsom's October 27 letter to Meshech Weare.<sup>2</sup> The enclosed copy of Rev. Jacob Duché's October 8, 1777, letter to General Washington is in the Josiah Bartlett Papers, NhD (microfilm).

## Joseph Jones to Thomas Burke

Dr. Sr.

York 30th Oct. 1777.

Attacks were made the 22d inst. on Forts Mifflin and Redbank in both of which the Enemy were repulsed. A Batterie on Province Island and two upon the Bank opposite to Fort Mifflin thrown up to reclaim the great marsh below Province Island opened upon the Fort, and were supported by six Ships warped through the Cheveaux defriez at Billingsport. Our Gallies and armed Vessells in the River assisted the Fort, and in conjunction they kept up so effectual a Cannonade upon the Ships as to disable a 64 Gun Ship and Sloop of War, or Small Frigate, & the Enemy set them on fire before they quitted. One of the four that retired was the Roebuck greatly damaged. Baron Dunop with 1200 men Attacked Red Bank and after a short Cannonade marched up with fixed Bayonets in two Columns. They passed the cavelte, entered the ditch & some passed the picket, but were so warmly received, they fell back & fled, leaving Baron Donop, his Brigade Maj., a Capt. Lieut. & upwards 70 men wounded & prisoners—1 Lieut. Colonel, 3 Capts., 4 Lieut. & neer 70 killed, neer 300 musketts and a considerable number cartridge Boxes &c

taken. We lost one Capt., 3 Serjts., 1 fife, 4 privates killed—1 Ensign, 5 Serjts. & 23 privates wounded. The loss in the Vessels & Fort Mifflin very inconsiderable. Yrs.

J. Jones

[P.S.] No letters from Gates confirming the surrender of Burgoyne and his Army.

RC (Nc-Ar).

## Daniel Roberdeau to Edward Hand

Dr General, York Town Pennsylvania Octr. 30. 1777

I was honored with your favor at Philad. My removal from thence and a multiplicity of public affairs have prevented an earlier notice of your kindness. I have enclosed you a letter for Mr. Irvine on the same subject,<sup>1</sup> which pleas to Seal and deliver, and if it should be in your power to accomplish my wishes, you will add to the obligations already conferred. At least you may guard me against any unforeseen evil, and your confidence shall not be abused.

I wrote you the 24th in company with Coll. Lee & Mr Law, a committee with myself to enquire into Coll. Morgan's conduct, concerning whom much is said, for which we cannot account, particularly your having put him under arrest. By return of Express please to give Mr. Irvine an opportunity to write and the same favr from you will further oblige. Dr. Genl., Yr most ob'dient Ser,

Daniel Roberdeau

P.S. The Surrender of Burgoyne & his army receives credit, but it is inaccountable that Coll. Wilkinson the express is not arrived. Surely he has fallen into the enemies hands, or has been very remiss.

This will probably be forwarded by an Officer, Mr. A. Harris, in which case you are desired to forward yr answer to the Committee by Express.

RC (Privately owned original, 1975). Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the letter of the Committee of Congress to Unknown dated October 24, 1777. The "Mr. Irvine" in question has not been identified.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris

Honble Gentlemen.

October 31, 1777

We have the pleasure to inclose you the capitulation by which Genl. Burgoyne and his Whole army surrendered themselves prison-

ers of War. This great event might have still been greater had not the operations on Hudson's river below Albany rendered it apprehensible that Sir Harry Clinton might come to the relief of Genl. Burgoyne as he had urged his way up to within forty four miles of Albany, at which place were lodged the principal Magazines of War and provisions for our Northern Army. Genl. Gates is now moving down the north river, having sent Genl. Stark with two thousand brave men to reduce Ticonderoga and the passes yet occupied by the Enemy on Lake George.

General Howe is yet at Philadelphia; but whether he will be able to continue there may be judged from a consideration of General Burgoyne's surrender—from the hitherto unavailing efforts of the enemy to get their Fleet up to the city from General Washington's—being with a good army now near Germantown, and closing upon the enemy's lines which run across the commons near Philadelphia, as we are informed from Delaware to Schuylkill after many smaller attempts had been made in vain upon Fort Island, and the Chevaux de Frize, a general and very powerful attack was made upon the 22d & 23d of this month on Red Bank by twelve hundred Hessians and on Fort Island by several Ships of war which approached as near as the Frize would admit, and by fire from Batteries erected on Province Island. The Hessians were led on by Count Donop, Colonel Commandant. They attempted the place by storm, and were repulsed with the loss of seventy dead on the spot, and seventy eight prisoners wounded. Among the latter are Colo. Donop and his Aid-Major. Among the former are a Lt. Colo. and some inferior Officers. From the Ships and Province Island Batteries a furious cannonade was long continued and warmly returned by Fort Mifflin and the gallies. At length the ships were obliged to retire with the loss of two which the Enemy set on fire themselves, and which were thus blown up. These two are said to be the Augusta of 64 guns and the Liverpool Frigate. The names of the ships we cannot be sure of yet, but that two men of war were destroyed is certain; and being desirous of giving you the most early information of the great events at the northward, We shall be more particular about the Delaware business hereafter. We rely on your wisdom and care to make the best and most immediate use of this intelligence to depress our enemies and produce essential aid to our cause in Europe. The public acknowledgement of the Independence of these United States would be attended with beneficial consequences, and whilst we proceed with diligence and care to profit from our advantages, we are sensible how essential European Aid must be to the final establishment and security of American Freedom and Independence. We are in daily expectation of hearing from you which we have not done since May last. As some of our Frigates are ordered to France under your after directions, we hope to hear in due time, that more effectual



distress hath been conveyed to the Commerce of our enemies. It were pity that some of their towns should not be made to suffer for the licentious conflagrations which have been kindled by them in America.

We have the honor to be &c, Signed,

R. H. Lee  
J. Lovell

FC (DNA: PCC, item 79).

## Daniel Roberdeau to George Bryan

Sir,

York Town, Octr. 31st, 1777

I acknowledge your favr, and thro' you beg to acknowledge one from my friend Col. Bayard, which is all I can do by this conveyance, as I am in danger of loosing it; for this reason I cannot forward Copies of the other dispatches this day recd per Express (Col. Wilkinson) but shall endeavour to do it very soon. The List <sup>1</sup> was taken before the Examination of Col. Wilkinson, which has occasioned two or three remarks from memory, but it is not to be depended on. An exact return is expected this day, and you must excuse me until a further Oppy. I am respectfully, Sir, Yr mot. ob. & very huml Serv.

Daniel Roberdeau.

RC (PHarH). Addressed: "The Honorable George Bryan Esqr., Vice President of the Supream Executive Council of Pennsilvania, Lancaster. Favored by Dr. Witherspoon."

<sup>1</sup>For the list of British casualties and prisoners, arms surrendered, and articles of convention signed at Saratoga that Roberdeau enclosed with this letter, see *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser., 5:726-28. This day Roberdeau also copied a return of the troops under General Burgoyne who surrendered at Saratoga and a return of "Ordnance Stores taken from the Enemy Octr. 7 & 17th, 1777," which he forwarded under separate cover to President Thomas Wharton. *Ibid.*, pp. 729-30; and Roberdeau to Timothy Matlack, November 1, 1777.

## Charles Thomson to George Washington

Sir,

York town Octr. 31. 1777

As Mr. Hancock took leave of Congress on Wednesday and yesterday set out on his way home to Boston, I have the honour to forward to you Copies of two letters this day received from general Gates and most heartily to congratulate you on the signal success with which providence has been pleased to bless our Arms.<sup>1</sup>

Col Wilkinson who brought the dispatches has not had time to sort and arrange his papers so as to lay before Congress an accurate account of the number of the enemy & the stores surrendered nor of

the present state of our Army in the northern department. He expects to be ready to lay them before Congress, to morrow, after which you will, doubtless, have a more perfect account transmitted to you.

I have the honour to be, Sr, Your obedient humble Servt,  
Cha Thomson

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:851. Thomson enclosed copies of letters from Gates to President Hancock of October 18 and 20, of Gates to Maj. Gen. John Vaughan of October 19, and of the Saratoga Convention, all of which are in the Washington Papers, DLC. For the difficulties Washington experienced in obtaining the details of the capture of Burgoyne's army, see Freeman, *Washington*, 4:545; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:440.

## Virginia Delegates to Patrick Henry

Sir,

York Town Oct. 31st 1777.

We have the honor and the pleasure to enclose you a copy of the capitulations by which Gen. Burgoyne and his army surrendered themselves prisoners of war. This great affair might have been still greater, if the near approach of Sir Henry Clinton to Albany (where our military and provision stores were lodged,) had not rendered dispatch necessary with General Burgoyne's army. Two thousand brave men under Gen. Stark are gone to Ticonderoga, and Gen. Gates with the main body of his army is moving down the North River to meet Gen. Vaughn, who yet remains about fifty miles below Albany. Two Brigades with the light corps under Col. Morgan, are on their way to join Gen. Washington. Nothing that we know of hath happened near Philadelphia, since the enemies' unsuccessful attack on Red Bank and Fort Mifflin, in which two of their ships of war were lost, and Count Donop with some inferior officers and 70 privates made prisoners. A more particular account of which has been already sent to Williamsburg. We have thought it of importance enough to send a particular Express with this glorious intelligence, which we hope will be approved. As the Artillery Officer (Capt. Loyauté), whom we had the honor of recommending for the command of the state Regiment of Artillery raising in our Commonwealth, is here waiting an answer, we could wish to be indulged with one by return of this Messenger. We are with esteem and respect Sir, your most obedient and very humble servants.

Joseph Jones

Jno. Harvie

Francis Lightfoot Lee

Richard Henry Lee

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to John Ewing

Sir

York in Pennsylvania, 1 Novr. 1777

The Committee for foreign affairs being informed by Mr. Smith of your intention to sail immediately for France gladly make use of the opportunity of sending the enclosed dispatches under your protection, for the American Commissioners at Paris.<sup>1</sup> As we deem it of consequence that the Packet should be carefully delivered and as speedily as possible, so we request of you, Sir, that, if you do not yourself go to Paris, immediately on your arrival in France, you hire at the expense of the Commissioners a trusty messenger to carry them the dispatches without delay. We have no doubt but you will take effectual care to prevent the dispatch from falling into the Enemies hands, by having it bagged with proper weight to be sunk in the Sea, if there should be a certainty of your being taken, which we hope will not be the case. We wish you a good voyage and are with due regard &c,

Signed R. H. Lee

J. Lovell

FC (DNA: PCC, item 79).

<sup>1</sup> Among the dispatches sent to the American commissioners at Paris was a brief November 1 letter from the committee introducing Ewing: "This will be delivered to you by Colo. Ewing of Baltimore in Maryland who goes to France on affairs of Commerce, and whom We recommended to your civilities as a Gentleman of worth, who has in arms contended for the liberty of America." PCC, item 79, fol. 121.

## Henry Laurens to the States

Sir

York Town 1st November 1777

The Arms of the United States of America having been blessed in the present Campaign with remarkable Success, Congress have Resolved to recommend that one day, Thursday the 18th December next be Set apart to be observed by all Inhabitants throughout these States for a General thanksgiving to Almighty God. And I have it in command to transmit to you the inclosed extract from the minutes of Congress for that purpose.<sup>1</sup>

Your Excellency *or Honour* will be pleased to take the necessary measures for carrying the Resolve into effect in the State in which you preside.

You will likewise find inclosed a Certified Copy of a minute which will Shew your Excellency the Authority under which I have the honour of addressing you.<sup>2</sup>

I am with great Esteem & regard, Sir, Your Excellencys most Obt. Servt.



Henry Laurens



LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Circular, by Express Messengers."

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:854-55.

<sup>2</sup> This day Laurens was elected John Hancock's successor as president of Congress. *JCC*, 9:854.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Timothy Matlack

Dr. Sir,

York Town Novr. 1t, 1777

Yesterday the confirmation of the northern affair arrived. The Convention at Saratoga was immediately forwarded to Council, and this day Genl. Gate's two letters, one to Congress the other to Genl. Vaughan, with an exact return of Prisoners and Stores surrendered. All these dispatches have been sent in the most slovenly manner, but it is impossible for me in the midst of publick Business without assistance, to be more correct, therefore I hope I have the excuse of council. Mr. Clingham this day took his Seat, pray where are the other Delligates?

Henry Laurens Vice President of So. Carolina a worthy, sensible, indefatigable Gentleman was this day chosen by a unanimous vote, except his own, President of Congress. I am, Dr. Sir, Yr. most obt Huml Sert,

Daniel Roberdeau

[P.S.] I am obliged to you for the paper & the several printed publications. Pray keep me advised.

RC (NNPM). Addressed: "To Timothy Matlack, Esqr, Secretary to the Honble The Supreme Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Lancaster. Favoured by Genl Kalb."

## William Smith to Thomas Johnson

Sir

York Town Novemr. 1. 1777

I did my self the honor, about Two days past, to inclose you a copy of the capitulation Signed by Lt. Genl. Burgoine the 16th ult. at Saratoga since which nothing material has ocured.

By a letter from Col. Hartley dated Head quarters, the 30th October he says Genl. Ld. Cornwallis had crossed the Delaware at Coopers ferry, at the head of 4000 men, Supposed with design to make a Second attack on red bank & from thence, on Fort Mifflin. But on holding a Council of War, he thought proper to return to the Citty without making any attack.

Inclosed you have a resolution of Congress, which I am directed to forward, & am with respect & esteem, Your Excellencys Mo. obt. hble Sert,

W. Smith

RC (MdAA).

## Board of War to Elias Boudinot

Dr Sir

War Office Novr 2d 1777

I am to inform you that Congress have desired Govr Clinton of N York to procure Workmen to work the Lead Mines in that State for Continental Use & if Workmen cannot otherwise be procured you are to furnish him on request with such Numbers of Prisoners of War as he shall require.<sup>1</sup> The Tory Prisoners would be suitably employed in this Business if there would not be too great Risque of their Escape. But the Sort of Prisoners are left to your Discretion unless Govr Clinton should particularize them.<sup>2</sup>

I am your very obed Servt.

Richard Peters Secy

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:847.

<sup>2</sup> Peters wrote again to Boudinot on November 7, requesting him to send the board an account of "all Tradesmen particularly Shoemakers among the Prisoners of War & where & with whom they are employed" as well as an account of "all American Prisoners in the Enemy's Hands," and ordering him to York to meet with the board as soon as possible. Elias Boudinot Papers, DLC.

## Board of War to Horatio Gates

Dr Sir

War Office Nov 2d 1777

I am directed to inform you that an Idea has been suggested to the Board of raising a Battallion of the Canadian Prisoners lately fallen into our Hands many of those Persons having been represented as Friends to the United States altho' they have by Compulsion borne Arms against us. As this Battallion will in all Probability be officered by French Officers you will be pleased to give your Opinion on the Measure & mention such Officers as you think worthy Appointments in Such a Corps should it be determined by Congress to raise it.<sup>1</sup>

I have the Honour to be, with great Regard, your very obed Servt,

Richard Peters Secy

RC (NH*i*).

<sup>1</sup> Raising a regiment composed of Canadian prisoners was proposed in a committee report submitted to Congress on December 2, but no such unit was established. See *JCC*, 9:986-87, 1037, 1049.

On November 7 Peters wrote another note to Gates, requesting that he make exact returns of "all Arms, Amunition & Military Stores taken from the Enemy during your having the Command of the Northern Army & where the same are or have been deposited." Gates Papers, NH*i*.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dr Sir

York Pennsylvania Novr. 2. 1777

Inclosed is a Letter for Mrs. Harnett & Mr. Hooper,<sup>1</sup> to the Latter I have sent the Convention signed by Genl. Burgoyne whereby he delivered himself up with his whole army on the 16 Ultimo, this great event will I trust in the end prove fatal to Our Enemys. Genl Howe is still in Philadelphia but we have every hope he will not long continue there. Our Little Fort & Fleet have still the Command of the river & it is hoped after the Loss of the Princess Augusta of 64 and the Liverpool of 28 Guns in their Attack of the 23 Ultimo they will fail in their next attempt of taking Fort Mifflin.

The Success of Genl. Gates will enable him to reinforce Genl. Washingtons Army near Germantown & Mr. Howes Scituation will be a little precarious. I can send you no papers, we have no press as yet here. I am fatigued to death attending Congress Night & day & can hardly find time to write to any of my friends. Make my best respects to Mr Quince, I expect you to Communicate every intelligence I send you, to him & all my friends. Dr Sir, Your friend & ob Sert,

Cornl. Harnett

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

## Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Mifflin

My dear General.

York, Novr. 2. 1777

I thank you for your obliging favor of the 28th past, and for the inclosures accompanying it. I assure you Sir that having received such original impressions of your firm attachment to the cause of America, I have ever placed you among her first and most valuable friends. *(You may judge then how unhappy I am made by your resignation.)* Trusting therefore to your patriotism, and my hopes of your returning health, I had ventured to mention your name for one of the three Commissioners of the new board of war—A most important department, on which our righteous warfare eminently depends.<sup>1</sup> Some Gentlemen supposed yr. health would hinder, others observed that the Continental policy forbid the union of two offices in the same person, supposing that you might be prevailed on to retain your commission of M. General could your health permitted action. The spirit of the Continental policy does forbid double Salaries, but the Generalship might be continued with the Board of war Salary. Indeed the nature of the latter business renders rank and knowledge in War necessary. I love America and venerate its faithful friends, which

must render it painful to be deprived, from whatever cause, of the assistance of its surest Supports in this crisis of its fate. I still hope however that returning health will enable you yet to continue your Aid for establishing the glory of North America on the most lasting foundations. I am yours dear Sir with sincere affection.

R.H. Lee

FC (ViU).

<sup>1</sup> Mifflin's resignation as quartermaster general for health reasons was accepted on November 7, but he was appointed immediately to the new Board of War. See *JCC*, 9:874; and Henry Laurens to Mifflin, November 8, 1777 (1st letter), note. Mifflin's November 12 reply, in which he indicated that he would accept the board position, is in Richard H. Lee, *Memoir of the Life of Richard Henry Lee* . . . , 2 vols. (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey and I. Lea, 1825), 2:174.

## North Carolina Delegates to Richard Caswell

Sir

York Town Novr. 2nd. 1777

By an express who was going to Williamsburg last week we informed you of the report that General Burgoyne and his whole army had surrendered themselves prisoners of War to General Gates.<sup>1</sup> Yesterday Colo. Wilkinson arrived here, which enables us to inclose you a copy of the Articles of Convention, which circumstance we hope will be followed by others of equal Importance soon.

General Clinton with 4 or 5000 from the City of York had got possession of Fort Montgomery and had passed so far up the No. River as to burn the little Town of Kingston. They were within a few days of Albany. General Burgoyne had twelve days Provision, and in Strong Ground well fortified, in such a situation the above was a most fortunate event for us.

General Gates is exerting himself against the rest of the British Soldiers in that Quarter. Our Troops are in High spirits having been successful in every engagement since the evacuation of Ticonderoga.

We have received no accounts from Gen'l. Washington since our last letter to you, which we expect will be delivered to you before This, as we wrote to George Wythe Esq in Williamsburg requesting that he would Immediately send off our letter by an express & that your Excellency would take care to have the expence paid.<sup>2</sup>

Inclosed is a Resolve of Congress appointing the eighteenth day of December for a General Thanksgiving throughout the United States. In our last we sent a copy of all the money that has been paid for the use of North Carolina, also several other resolves relating to the recruiting business.

We shall take care to give you the earliest account of what ever change may happen in our affairs. We have no newspapers to inclose



for want of a press being established in this Town, however we expect one soon. We are with due respect, Sir, Your obedient Servts.

J Penn

Cornl Harnett

[P.S.] We hope to get over the Confederation in a Fortnight. We shall transmit a copy to your Excellency as soon as that event happens without loss of Time.

J Penn

C Harnett

RC (MeHi). Written by Penn and signed by Penn and Harnett.

<sup>1</sup> See North Carolina Delegates to Caswell, October 20, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The North Carolina delegates' letter to Wythe has not been found.

## John Adams to Abigail Adams

My dearest Friend

York Town November 3. 1777

This Moment I received your favour of Octr. 6. by Mr. Niles. I am as well as can be expected.

We have no News, but such as is old to you.

I congratulate you on the great and glorious Events in the northern Department. Congress have ordered a Thanksgiving, and have done great Honour to the Officers.

We shall finish the Confederation in a few days.

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:365.

## Henry Laurens to John Hancock

Dear Sir

York 3d November 1777.

It is with great pleasure I obey the Order of Congress by transmitting the inclosed Testimony of the Love & Esteem of your Country in a Vote of thanks for your long & faithful Services in the Chair.<sup>1</sup> I likewise enclose a Certified minute Shewing the authority under which I have the honour of addressing you. I am with great respect &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 9:852-54.

## James Lovell to William Whipple

My Dear Sir,

Novr 3d [1777] York Town

I rec'd your kind hasty scrawl of the 18th ulto by Col Wilkinson. I am rejoiced that you got to Saratoga time enough to help gather the laurels as you hoped when you were mounting at Portsmouth. I have had a few lines from your brother since you left home. I hope this will find you in health at or near town and that you will see Mr L—— or Doctr Gardner and relate some little anecdotes about the crest fallen Lt General John Burgoyne to them so that I may have them again at second hand. I have hinted to you before that *your* department was gaining honor, and that the Lords of the American Admiralty might hold up their heads. The enclosed will be quite agreeable to you as a confirmation of what I before only hinted. Nickolson thought he could get out of Chesapeake but now writes that 4 men of war infest that bay and make it dangerous to attempt a pass out. He is desirous to go with 100 of his men to Delaware to assist in fighting the gallies. I believe this will be granted.

Our late President has left us, and Col Laurens of South Carolina is chosen to succeed. He is a very good man both for order and dispatch, a gentleman of fortune and known in Europe, having travelled as well as traded largely. The dangers of letters being intercepted at North River prevents my running into confidential particulars at this time. Mr. S.A. will soon go to New England, and I believe Mr J.A. also. I shall tell you some laughables by them.

Confederation has gone on pretty well lately. I suppose the Council of State will be thrown out and a Committee of Congress be left in recesses to transact prudentials.<sup>1</sup>

The State of Pennsylvania seems to be a little roused and the Govt has made an Act to confiscate Tory estates.

In addition to Deanes folly, our sister Georgia has sent blank Continental Commissions to France for officers to raise men. Bingham gave us the first account. We have rapped Miss over the knuckles and sent a copy of the protest-like Resolve to our Commissioners.<sup>2</sup>

I am affectionately yrs,

J.L.

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> On November 7 Congress did replace the proposed council of state with a virtually powerless committee of states. See *JCC*, 9:879–80.

<sup>2</sup> On October 18 Congress had voted its strong disapproval of Georgia's efforts to recruit officers in France "without application to Congress" and had sent copies of its resolves to Georgia and the American commissioners at Paris. *JCC*, 9:820–21. For a discussion of Georgia's efforts to obtain direct aid from France, see Robert R. Crout, "Pierre-Emmanuel de La Plaigne and Georgia's Quest for French Aid during the War of Independence," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 60 (Summer 1976): 176–84.

## Samuel Adams to James Warren

My dear sir,

York Town Pennsilva Novr. 4. 77

I wrote to you last Week by Mr Hancock and gave you a curious Anecdote.<sup>1</sup> The Affair was brought on—it labord a whole Afternoon. The Principle was objected to—it was urgd to be unprecedented, impolitick, dangerous. The Question was then put of the Propriety of the Measure in any Instance. Passd in the Affirmative 6 to 4. The original Question was then put. Passd in the Affve., the same Division. The Yeas and Nays were called for: Yea, C, N.Y., J, V, N.C., S.C. Nay, N.H., M, R., P.<sup>2</sup> Adieu.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> A reference to his October 30 letter to Warren in which he had discussed efforts to give Hancock an official vote of thanks for his performance of the office of president.

<sup>2</sup> On the question of whether “it is improper to thank any president,” which was brought to a vote on October 31, Adams’ memory was already faulty, for the journals record the states equally divided on the issue. On “the original Question” to thank Hancock, however, the journals do record an affirmative six-to-four vote. See *JCC*, 9:853–54.

## Thomas Burke to Richard Caswell

Dr. Sir,

Tyaquin Nov. 4th. 1777.

I left York Town in Pennsylvania on the 1st ulto.<sup>1</sup> and arrived at home on the 26th. After our retreat from Philadelphia, I remained at Burlington a week in daily expectation of an action at the British Army’s crossing the Schuylkill. In this Expectation I was disappointed, the Enemy crossed and marched to Philadelphia without opposition. I have not yet heard, or been able to suggest a reason, which gives me sufficient satisfaction for that Event. Our Army was on their Flank, and why they crossed without an attack remains yet to be sufficiently explained to me. After the Enemy had got possession of the City, I set out and found myself obliged to direct my route by Eastown, Bethlehem, Reading and Lancaster, to York which constituted a very difficult Journey.

While I was at Reading, happened the Battle of Chesnut Hill, and Germantown, wherein we unfortunately lost Gen. Nash, one of the best, the most respected and regretted officers in the Continental Army. The particulars of this Battle Mr Harnett informed me he wrote you before my arrival at York and I will not trouble you with a repetition. Upon the whole it appears that our miscarriage sprung from the usual source, want of abilities in our Superior Officers, and want of order and discipline, in our Army. This Sir is an Evil of the

most dangerous tendency, and to remedy it has long been the object of my thoughts and endeavours. Indeed I saw very little prospect of success until very lately, but just before I left Congress I had the pleasure to find that every Gentleman was equally sensible of the necessity of applying a proper remedy. The great difficulty will be to get over particular Connections, and personal regards, but it must be effectually remedied or all our Efforts are in vain.

The miscarriages in Pennsylvania have made it necessary it seems, to order the Troops which defended the passes of the High Lands on the Hudson's River to be withdrawn to reinforce General Washington. General Clinton taking advantage of this has attacked and carried fort Montgomery, burned our Frigates in that River, and opened the communication between New York and Albany, except only some little ineffectual bits that remain. The Army under Genl Gates, as well as that under Genl Washington were situated so near the Enemy that little seemed to be done but to attack them. A Battle of considerable importance was every day expected to be fought by each army, and our force was so much Superior to that of the Enemy that we have every reason to hope for signal success. Nothing indeed can prevent it, but some of those unfortunate blunders which have lately been so frequent in our Army. Upon the whole Sir, I am in daily expectation of an account of signal victories gained over both armies of our Enemies, but I dare not promise it, having been of late so cruelly disappointed of my most sanguine and well founded expectations.

Very little of any consequence has been lately determined in Congress. The Confederation was the subject of daily consideration when I came away, but as I consider the plan now in embryo, as what can never be suited to the States, I think nothing decided on it, is of consequence. I fear I differ very widely on this subject with a majority in Congress. I deem a time of peace and tranquility, the proper time for agitating so important a concern, but some, and not a few, are of opinion that advantage should be taken of the present circumstances of the States which are supposed favorable for pressing them, to a very close Connexion, but more Sir of this when we meet.<sup>2</sup> My long absence from home has very much deranged my rustic affairs, and they require much of my own particular attention to restore them. This makes it exceedingly inconvenient to me to go to Newbern immediately. I will therefore beg to be excused for a week or two, but if my presence be required there I will set off immediately on your signifying your Commands, an opportunity for which will immediately offer by the messenger who will bring up a writ for an Election of a Commoner for this County to fill an occasional vacancy which has happened. I saw Capt Caswell at Brandywine on the field of Battle. I saw him next day at Chester, and since I have enquired for him, and heard he was well.



I have the honor to be Dr Sir, yr mo obt servt,

Thos. Burke

Tr (Nc-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> This is clearly a transcribing error because Burke wrote a letter to Gen. John Sullivan from York on October 12 and according to the journals he voted in Congress on October 14. *JCC*, 9:801, 804. Another text of this letter, in *N.C. State Records*, 22:973-75, states that Burke "left York town . . . on the 13th ulto.," but this too cannot be reconciled with his vote in Congress on the 14th. Furthermore, this text contains other misreadings of Burke's letter as well.

<sup>2</sup> See also Burke's Remarks on the Articles of Confederation, December 16, and Notes on the Articles of Confederation, December 18, 1777.

## Eliphalet Dyer to Joseph Trumbull

Dear Sir

York Town Novr 4th 1777

Your favour of the 20th Ultmo. came safe to hand by an Express sent by Govr Trumbull. Am very glad to hear my family & friends are well. I wrote you and Sundry other letters to my family by Brown a few days Agoe now on his way with Mr Hancock, since which Nothing New has turned up this way. I think our Army here seem rather Inactive since the Battle at German Town. Real true Spirit & Bravery this way seems much Confined to our two forts at Red Bank & fort Mifflin down the river and to our Gallies and Water Craft. They have Nobly defended that pass hitherto but unless Genll Washington should Act Vigorously Against How the Other way they must soon fall a Sacrifice to perservering Supr. force. We never had full and Official Accounts of the Interesting Event at the Northward till the Arrival of Coll Wilkinson on Fryday last. We had almost began to despair, but at length our joy was full on recieving a Confirmation of the whole. I hope the most sincere Gratitude may arise to Heaven from every Quarter on this most Signal Interposition of Providence in our favour. I find our Assembly are alarmed at the Neglect in the Commissy Department. The plan you know I reprobate as do more than half of Congress & many more now see their Error. They have mended & mended in several Instances, but it cannot wholly relieve.<sup>1</sup> As I before wrote you such alterations were made, as were the principal Objections pointed out by Mr Colt to Congress, of which they advised him long agoe & supposed he was in full action & exertion in the business, but now fear the Express has fallen into the hands of the Enemy. We have had a rumour that was the case with one, we Imagine it was Yours, the Stores you sent for your Order & by whom I wrote you & sent my Summer Gown & some other Useless thing. Especially after Browns arrival having heard Nothing of him before he came away I wish you would let me know in your Next Wheither he is returned. Congress Cannot concieve how

you & Mr Gray should be of Opinion that you had no Authority to Deliver or he or his Assistants to recieve the Provisions & Stores in your hands when it is expressly provided in the 6th Article for you or your Deputies to Deliver over to the Commissary Genll. or his Deputies or Assists all & every kind of Provision &c in the Commissary department &c. Gray is much blamed for not recieving them as he has Authority Independt of the Commissary Genll & has a right to appoint what Subs or Assistants he pleases. But that there be no further delay Govr Trumbull & his Council of Safety are Impowerd to appoint Commisys of purchases or Issues as they find Necessary.<sup>2</sup> It will be a Jumble when all is done but we must make the best of it. We are about appointing a board over the Commissary & QuartrMaster Department to super Intend & regulate from time &c. You are in Nomination for one of the three.<sup>3</sup> I suppose they will have good Salaries perhaps 2000 dolls per Annum. My regards to Coll Wylls. Tell him I will let him hear from me the Moment Congress arrive at my favorite Wyoming but at present we think we are tolerably safe while we are beyond that Capital River. Respects to all friends. Affectionate regards to family & dear Amelia and am as Usual Yours,  
Elipht Dyer

[P.S.] Congress calls, cannot review my letter, you must take it as it comes, have heard Nothing from Coll Thos for some time. E D

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> For the October 4 resolves concerning the commissary department, see *JCC*, 9:766-68.

<sup>2</sup> See Henry Laurens to Israel Putnam, this date, note.

<sup>3</sup> Although Trumbull was not one of the three members named to the new Board of War on November 7, he was appointed on the 27th. See *JCC*, 9:818-20, 874, 959-60, 971.

## Henry Laurens to the Carlisle Committee

Gentlemen,

York 4th November 1777

Your Letter of the 22d Ulto. was duly received & taken under Consideration by Congress. The delay of a reply is imputable to the bad State of health of the late president The Honorable John Hancock Esqr. who having Suffered under the Gout Several days before he retired from this place could not have discharged every branch in his department with his wonted facility & precision.

You will receive under this Cover a Certified minute of Congress of the 25 October injoining the president to request you will take proper measures for making the Gaol in Carlisle as comfortable as circumstances will admit of for the accomodation of the prisoners.<sup>1</sup>

I likewise inclose a minute Shewing the Authority under which I

have the honour of addressing you—And remain with great regard,  
Gentlemen, Yours &ca

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:840. The Carlisle, Pa., Committee had pointed out in its October 22 letter that the Carlisle County jail, where Dr. John Kearsley and other prisoners were being kept, "is not glazed and is otherwise unfit for a Gentleman in Health, especially in the Cold Season," and that the committee itself was unauthorized to deal with the problem. PCC, item 78, 15:273.

## Henry Laurens to Israel Putnam

Sir

York 4th November 1777

Congress having yesterday taken under consideration a Letter of the 20th Ultio. from his Excellency Governor Trumbull relative to provision & other matters in the Northern department came to Several Resolutions a Certified Copy of these together with a Certified Copy of Resolutions of the 4th October relative to the appointment of Deputy Commissaries General of purchases & Issued for the Eastern district &ca. you will find inclosed the latter Sent upon presumption the original had been miscarried to which I beg leave to refer.<sup>1</sup>

I likewise transmit a Certified minute from the Journal of Congress which will Shew the Authority under which I have the honour of addressing you. I am with the utmost Esteem &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). FC (CSmH).

<sup>1</sup> In his October 20 letter Governor Trumbull described Gens. Horatio Gates' and Israel Putnam's recent inability to obtain certain food supplies from Connecticut because of the state's lack of a duly authorized commissary. Congress read this letter on November 3 and promptly authorized the governor and council of Connecticut "to appoint a deputy commissary general of purchases, and a deputy commissary general of issues," provided that Gen. Putnam had not already appointed such officers as he had been empowered to do by an October 4 resolve. See *JCC*, 9:766, 856, 858-59; and PCC, item 66, 1:349-54. Laurens also transmitted this resolve in a brief letter that he wrote to Governor Trumbull on November 4. PCC, item 13, fol. 3.

## Henry Laurens to John Sullivan

Sir

York Town Novr. 4th. 1777

Your dispatch of the 24th Ultimo together with the several Papers said to be enclos'd and refer'd to fell into my Hands and were immediately reported to Congress.<sup>1</sup>

It is with particular satisfaction I obey the Order of Congress by transmitting you the enclos'd resolution of the 20th October relative

to your Conduct in the late Expedition to Staten Island. The Publication in Print is delay'd only till a Press can be set to work, which it is expected will be in a few days. In the mean time a Copy of the Resolution will be sent to his Excellency General Washington & will without doubt be made publick in the Army.<sup>2</sup> This repeated Order will also confirm to you the Sentiments of Congress upon your Conduct in general.

I have the honour to be wth. great regard, Sir, Your most obedient servt,  
Henry Lawrence President in Congress

Tr (Capt. J. G. M. Stone, Annapolis, Md., 1973).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Sullivan's October 25 letter and enclosures, defending himself against the criticism of North Carolina delegate Thomas Burke, are in Sullivan, *Letters* (Hammond), 1:547-64.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the background of the October 20 resolve exonerating Sullivan of blame for the failure of an August 22 raid on Staten Island, see John Hancock to Washington, September 14, 1777, note 2. Laurens transmitted a copy of this resolve with a brief letter that he wrote this day to Washington, and Washington published it in his general orders for November 12. PCC, item 13, fol. 2; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:46-47.

## Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke

Honored Sir

York Novr. 4th. 1777.

I sincerely congratulate you upon the Glorious Events at the Northward, I here inclose you the Return of the Prisoners—And the Letters printed by Order of Congress shewing the Situation of our affairs upon the Delaware—Written Copies whereof I transmitted you in my last. The troops of Our State under the Command of Col Greene have acquired no little Honor. We have just recd. a Report, that Our People have taken Rhode-Island and fifteen hundred Prisoners, but we wait for a happy Confirmation.<sup>1</sup>

I hear nothing of Mr. Ellery, but am hourly expecting Him. Till I have the Honor of seeing You I remain, Honored Sir, your most obedt. and very humble Servt,  
Hy Marchant

RC (R-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> This "Report" was false, but see also the next entry.

## Benjamin Rumsey to Benedict Edward Hall

Dear Sir<sup>1</sup>

4 Novr. 1777 York Town

Smallwood was well known in our State. He had the Advantage of heading the first Maryland Troops. They were well trained, well officered, well cloathed, cut a fine Figure and did remarkable Service and were in early Times an Older Man too.



Generals cannot be made so fast as they used to be. Maryland chose to have Generals of some Experience, surely it will be pretty well to become a Brigadier in a Couple of Campaigns, a whole Life Time does not attain to it scarcely in Europe.

Maryland is intitled to two Brigadiers more and a Major General. I apprehend Colo. Gist and Carvill will be the Men for Price is in no Estimation in the Army, they I suppose will be appointed this Winter if their gallant Actions merit it.<sup>2</sup>

I cannot think Carvill discontented, he was willing to accept of the 4th Battallion. He got the 3d you say; he has not yet served One Campaign in the regular Service. He has intimated no such Matter to You or myself.

All are new Faces in Congress, I cannot sound untill I contract some Acquaintance but the above was the Sense of the Maryld. Delegates with Respect to not proposing our Brigadiers too early and of Congress in granting them when asked for.

I have not seen Mr. Morris since the Receipt of yours. I shall write to Carvill when I see him. I inclose You the Terms of Burgoyne's Capitulation which he would have called a Convention. Our Army was composed of 7139 Rank and File fit to do Duty, 900 and odd on Command and above 1000 Officers somewhat exceeding 9000. Theirs 4991, above 1000 Officers and exceeding 6000, thirty five Peices of Cannon, Tents, Stores &c. Brigadier Stark with 2000 Voluntiers were within two Miles at the Time of Surrender, he has marched with them determined to take Ticonderoga & Mount Independance by Assault.

Genl. Gates will attack Forts Montgomery & Clinton and be ready to assist Genl. Washington or to lend Assistance to Stark if he fails and also watch Clinton.

Newport in Rhode Island is said to be taken by the New Englanders and 1500 Britons made prisoners, it comes in a Letter from Moore Furman in the Jerseys to some Gentleman in Lancaster.

Congress present Gates with a Medal and their Thanks to him and his officers and Men—Lieut Colo. Smith and Commodore Hazelwood with Swords the one for his gallant Defence of the Fort and the other for destroying the Ships Augusta and Aurora.

I am Yours Affy,

Benjamin Rumsey

RC (MdHi).

<sup>1</sup> Benedict Edward Hall of Shandy Hall, Harford Co., Md., vestryman and justice of the county court.

<sup>2</sup> Congress did not elevate another Maryland officer to the rank of brigadier general until Col. Mordecai Gist was promoted in January 1779; and not until September 1780, when Brig. Gen. William Smallwood was promoted, did Maryland acquire a major general. See *JCC*, 13:46; 18:828. Cols. Thomas Price and Josias Carvill Hall remained in command of the Second and Fourth Maryland battalions until April 1780 and January 1781 respectively.

## William Williams to Joseph Trumbull

Dear Sir

York Town. 4 Nov. 1777

I have not time to say any thing of Politics or News, if We had any. Congress seem'd surprized that you shod be at a Loss about delivering over Stores, as it is most explicitly mentioned in the new (confounding) Comissa Plan, that all Stores shall be delivered over to the Comis. of Issues, his Deputy, or Assistants &c & there seems no doubt by any thing you or any Body writes, but that there is such Officer in the eastern Department. & a Gent. whisper'd me in Congress (not knowing I suppose of my Connections) that He wishd some body woud write Mr Trumbull, that it was the opinion of all unprejudiced Persons, that He was so angry & chaafed, at being out of the Office, tho voluntary, that He was contriving by every way & mean in his power to thawrt & hinder the Success & progress of the Business & disconcert their Affairs &c.<sup>1</sup> It will make you mad, as it did me while I utterly disbelieve it, & think you incapable of such baseness. Congress some time since made some alteration in the plan, to ease Colts objections &c. which will be sent by the Presidt. They have also impowered the Gov & Council to appoint a D. Comy. Genl of Issues, lest there shod not be any to receive &c. We last night heard a Rumuor that our Forces had Succeeded on Rhode Island, & taken 1500 Prisoners. God grant it might prove true. Great & marvelous has been our Success at the northward, by the infinite Mercy of the God of Armys & to his Name be all the Glory.

Our little Strength all the Delaware has prospered beyond all Expectation. I cant add but that I am, yr Affece sincere Friend & Bror,  
W Williams

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> For Jeremiah Wadsworth's November 26, 1777, letter to Williams, vigorously countering these allegations against Trumbull, see Burnett, *Letters*, 2:543n. For Eliphalet Dyer's comments on Williams' letter, see Dyer to Joseph Trumbull, December 15, 1777.

## Eliphalet Dyer to Horatio Gates

Sir

York-Town Novembr 5th 1777

I most sincerely Congratulate you on the glorious Success with which the Almighty has Crowned your most faithfull Indeavours in the cause of your Country, Against a late triumphant Enemy; and that He hath made you the happy Instrument in bringing down the lofty pride and haughty Insolence of a Vain glorious Burgoyne, who had spread terror and Consternation through our Northern Country, Untill Providence over ruled (against a Violent opposition) to replace

you in the cheif Command over our Northern Department, and thereby to give New life & Vigor to our desponding Citizens, to rouse them with Chearfullness & Alacrity to Step forth in the Sinking cause of their Country & to place themselves under the Command of a General whose Skill, prudence, & Bravery they had before experienced, And in whom, Under Heaven they could place their greatest Confidence. It is this, with the love of their Country, which has Animated your Troops to endure every hardship with patience, to Encounter every danger to which they were called with Bravery, Untill Victory Crownd their labour & Conquest satisfied their Wishes and desire.

Have no doubt but all the true & Virtuous Friends of their Country are Impressed with a grateful sense of the goodness & favour of Almighty God, for this singular and most Interesting Event, at the same time your friends sincerely rejoice that you have more than Answered their Sanguine expectations, yet you will not be surprised if it should raise the Envie of your Enemies & those who had with Violence opposed your Command in that Quarter. But the success which has attended your Conduct, and followed your plan of operation, now forces some acknowledgement even from those, of the Prudence of the measure in restoring you to your proper Command. I have the pleasure to Inform you that Congress are not only happy in the Event, but entirely satisfied in your Closing the Convention, at the time, & in the time, & in the manner you did and dare say the Impartial World will not only Justifye but Applaud you therein. The Chance of Warr was too (*great to hazzard*) dubious to admit of a Delay, the Advantages proposed by Your Enemy, in their terms of surrendry too great, to leave to Chance. The preserving your Army Undiminished, & in spirit & Vigor for future operations, was wise & prudent. The preventing a further Effusion of the blood & especially of your own Troops was Humane and discreet. They were both objects justly weighed and Considered by you, & will ever in the Opinion of wise & good men fully Justifye your Wisdome, and commend your Prudence, in foregoing some formalities, and restrictions which have at times been Obtained of our Enemy. Capitulating when circumstances & appearances were very different from what they were when you was so happy as to Close the Convention.

Congress have Ordered their Thanks to you & the Army And a gold Medal to be presented you in their Name & in the Name of the United States they represent in Testimony of the high Sense they Entertain of your Merits & Services the memory of which I trust will ever be gratefully retained by them, & Especially the New England States.<sup>1</sup>

Am with the greatest Esteem and Regard, Your Obedt. Hle Servt,  
Elipht Dyer

RC (NH).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:861-62.

## Henry Laurens to Richard Caswell

Sir, York Town 5th November 1777.

I had the honour of writing to Your Excellency the 1st Inst. by the hand of Jacob Upp who in his way to South Carolina is to leave a Packet directed to you at Hallifax.

Congress having taken under their consideration the Merits of many brave Officers in the Armies of the United States were pleased to distinguish the Name of the late Brigadier General Nash who fell by a Mortal Wound received in the battle of German Town & to Vote the Sum of five hundred Dollars for erecting a Monument to his Memory. I am directed to transmit the inclosed Certified Resolve of the 4th Inst.<sup>1</sup> & to request Your Excellency to give the necessary Orders for accomplishing in the most effectual manner the views of Congress upon this occasion.

I have the honour to be, sir, Your Excellencys, Most Obedient servant,  
Henry Laurens, Presidt. in Cong.

RC (Nc-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:861.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir, York Town Pennsylvania 5th Novem. 1777

On the 1st Inst. Colonel Wilkinson delivered your several despatches to Congress & at their request briefly added a recital of circumstances attending the Convention of Saratoga, he has since laid before the House all the Papers relative to that Contract & the returns of both Armies. These have afforded satisfaction not only to the Representative body, but universally to the good people here, the glorious Intelligence is now extending from City to City diffusing Joy in the heart of every Loyal American to the remotest State in the Union.

I feel my self particularly happy in the honour of transmitting the inclosed Vote of Thanks by Congress in their own Name & on behalf of their Constituents to Your-Self, to Major General Lincoln, Major General Arnold & the rest of the Officers & Troops under your Command, with an additional Vote for perpetuating the remembrance of this great event by a Medal.<sup>1</sup>

Your Name Sir will be written in the breasts of the grateful Americans of the present Age & sent down to Posterity in Characters which will remain indelible when the Gold shall have changed its appearance. Permit me Sir to add that I participate not only in the general rejoicing but in that also which is visible among your very best freinds.



Congress have this day confirmed several Resolutions for the disposition of the Troops in the Eastern & Northern departments, for the recovery & secure possession of Hudson's River, for reinforcing the Main Army near Philadelphia & for other purposes, which extended & Certified you will find under Cover with this. I likewise inclose a Certified Minute shewing the Authority under which I have the honour of addressing you and to these Papers severally I beg leave to refer.

I am with the most perfect Esteem & Regard, Sir, Your Most Obedient & humble servant,

Henry Laurens, Presidt. in Cong.

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 9:861-62.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir.

York Town 5th Novem. 1777

I had the honour of addressing you yesterday in a Letter which from unavoidable delay will accompany this.

I now forward two Extracts from the Minutes of Congress both dated the 4th Inst.—One containing an Order founded upon a Report from the Marine Committee relative to the Continental Frigates & other Navigation at & near Borden Town submitted to your Excellency for approbation & in that event requiring necessary assistance for the construction & management of Batteries to be erected. The other minute testifying the attention of Congress to the Merits of such of the Officers & Troops of the United States as are specially recited in the Resolves in order that the several Votes upon this occasion may be made Public in the Army under Your Excellency's Command.

I beg the liberty of passing under Your Excellency's protection Letters to Commodore Hazelwood, Colonel Green & Lieutt. Colo. Smith containing severally the Vote of Congress respecting each of those brave Officers.<sup>1</sup> Permit me also Sir, to trouble you with a Packet for the Honorable Mr. Speaker of Assembly in Delaware & to request you will order it to be forwarded by the first conveyance.

I have the honour to be, with great Respect & Regard, Sir, Your Excellency's Most obedt. humble Servant,

Henry Laurens, Presidt. in Cong.

P.S. P.M. The 5th. November.

Since writing as above Congress have confirmed several Resolutions for the disposition of the Troops in the Eastern & Northern departments, for the Recovery & protection of North River, the reinforcing the Main Army near Philadelphia & other matters, which extended

& Certified Your Excellency will find under cover with this & to which I beg leave to refer. H.L.

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup>This day Laurens wrote identical letters to John Hazelwood, Christopher Greene, and Samuel Smith, transmitting resolutions of thanks for their role in the defense of the Delaware. PCC, item 13, fols. 8-9; and JCC, 9:862.

## James Lovell to Horatio Gates

Dear Sir

Novr. 5th. from York Town (1777)

I sincerely rejoice with you in the happy events which have taken place since you returned to the northern Department which had gone almost to ruin in your absence from it.

I hope the brave men who are under your command will restore our affairs on the north river, under your future plans. I wish good old Putt may not think hard of the proposals of congress sent you at this Time. He is really wanted in the neighbourhood of Philada.<sup>1</sup> He is a brave man and will not rest long without Enterprise, tho he cannot maintain posts and fight battles without Soldiers. He was Stripped almost to the Skin, and if Harry Clinton had moved 8 Days Sooner up the River, Albany & your army into the bargain would have been lost. I hope Genl W——n still holds the Idea of the Worth of a free Passage between the eastern States & these, which he expressed to Genl. Putnam some time ago. You certainly know the Value of it and will endeavour to gain fresh Laurels in recovering the Forts lately lost at the Highlands or in establishing better Posts, if better Ground is to be had. There is a flying Report that R Island is recovered, and that a third Man of War is burnt in Delaware River. I wish the Bearer may get a Confirmation of this Intelligence on his way to you.

If you are not Sincerely regarded here in general, yet there is at least a modesty as to any appearance of the old Opposition. You would have been pleased at an Incog Survey of Faces for Weeks back. Tho we were 12 Days without Confirmation of Intelligence given by the Committee of Albany, yet I did not find any disposition to bite as was usual formerly at yr Reputation. We are getting on with a Sort of Confederation, and our Money will grow better apace by the exercise of Taxation, and the northern spirit catching in other Departments to drub the Enemy.

Your Son was here to take the good News for your Lady, at which doubtless her Heart will be glad.

I wish you Success most heartily in every undertaking of War, and many happy Years enjoyment of the Fruits of your great Labours in

peace hereafter being with great Regard Sir Your Friend and humb  
 Servt.  
 James Lovell

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> Maj. Gen. Israel Putnam, who had been commanding the Continental forces guarding the Hudson River, was ordered this day by Congress to report to Washington's headquarters, leaving Gates in command "in that quarter." *JCC*, 9:865.

## Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke

Honored Sir,

York Novr. 5th. 1777.

I enclose your Honor the Convention signed by Genl Burgoyne, also the Resolution of Congress for a General Thanksgiving, which I doubt not the Genl. Assembly will properly take into Consideration as soon as they meet, or if they should not meet timely, that your Honor & your Honorable Councill will properly recommend to the good People of our State.

I have the Honor to be your Honors most obedt. humble Servt.

Hy Marchant

RC (RHi). Addressed: "The Honorable Nicholas Cooke Esqr., Governor of the State of Rhode Island, Providence."

## Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board

Gentlemen

November 5th 1777

Your letter of the 27th ultimo to Mr. Morris having been laid before Congress, you will find enclosed herein A Copy of their Resolves in consequence thereof, and we have only to add that you are to be governed by such Orders and Instructions as you may receive from his Excellency General Washington to whom a Copy of the said Resolves are also sent forward.<sup>1</sup> We have the preservation of the Shipping up the Delaware much at Heart, particularly the Frigates, and should they be sunk we see but little probability of their being got up again before the Winter sets in.

We are sorry that you have been so distress'd for want of money, the Committee imagined that your former application had been attended to, but by some on accountable neglect find it is otherways. We now inclose you herein, an Order on the Loan Officer of the State of New Jersey for 40,000 Dollars of which you will make due note;<sup>2</sup> and depending on your care and attention to all things that

will be for the benefit of the Public, we remain, Gentlemen, Your very hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> On October 27 Washington had advised the Middle Department Navy Board to sink the unfinished frigates above Bordentown in such a way that they could be raised later. Although on November 4 Congress approved the Marine Committee's report suggesting instead that the frigates be hauled ashore and that batteries be constructed to defend them, Washington advised the board on the ninth that the general officers unanimously agreed that no men could be spared for constructing and defending such works and that scuttling the frigates was the best means for securing them. The frigates were sunk, but soon raised and used as barracks for seamen until they were destroyed by the British in May 1778. See *JCC*, 9:863-64; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:445-48, 10:30-31; and Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, p. 296.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 9:868-69.

## Marine Committee to James Nicholson

Sir

November 6th 1777

This Committee being wearied with the long delay of the Frigate Virginia under your Command in port, and with the great expence Accruing on that Account, have determined that you shall proceed to sea by the first favourable opportunity and depend much on your experience and prudent management to have this desirable business speedily accomplished. You have inclosed your Instructions for the Voyage.<sup>1</sup>

You will inform Captain Parker of the Phoenix that it has been the constant practice throughout the United states to suffer British seamen taken in the merchant service to depart at their pleasure, and consequently there can no just demand be made on us from the British Navy for a return of such persons in lieu of what they have heretofore discharged, because if that Account was to be fairly settled and a List made out of what we and what they have discharged without Account the Ballance would be very considerably in our favour, and still much greater were we to include the vast number of Passengers and other British subjects not seamen heretofore discharged without account; but the practice of exchanging Officer for Officer of equal Rank, and Sailor for Sailor of those taken in Ships of war will be continued. Mr. Barney the Bearer informs us you want a Lieutenant, he will rank onboard the Virginia as second Lieutenant, should he be agreeable to you in that station we have directed him to obey your Orders. Wishing you success we remain Sir, Your hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> See Marine Committee to Nicholson, October 23, 1777.



## Board of War to George Washington

Sir

War Office Novr. 7th 1777

The Board after making every Enquiry they can & after viewing the subject in every Light they are capable of are convinced of the Necessity & Rectitude of siezing Blanketts, Shoes & Necessaries for the Army from People of all Characters who can possibly spare them & from the disaffected altho the measure should expose them to the greatest Difficulties which however cannot be greater than the Wants of the Army now subject them to & if either must suffer both Policy & Justice direct that the Distress should fall upon those who are injuring instead of defending their Country. I am to inform you that the Board have not the least prospect of obtaining Blanketts at any Rate or Shoes in any reasonable Time unless in the Way above pointed out. They therefore request that your Excellency will be pleased to appoint (if you have not already done it) proper spirited Officers to collect Necessaries for the Army in this State as well as in other Places & that they should without Hesitation take from the disaffected in Chester County particularly every thing wanted for the Use of the Army.<sup>1</sup> I am directed to mention Major Robinson of Col. Johnston's Regt as a proper Person to be employed in Chester County as he well knows the People there.

With the greatest Respect, I have the Honour to be, Your very  
obedt Servt,

Richard Peters Secy

[P.S.] I have the Honour of your Excellency's Letter of the 3d Inst.<sup>2</sup> The Board will consult Congress to know if any Promise was made the Chevalier Portail of the Nature he mentions in his Memorial. At present they are totally unacquainted with any such Promise.

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's November 11 letters to Congress and to the Board of War, proposing that clothing be collected by state-appointed agents rather than by military seizure, are in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:36-40. In response Congress repeated its suggestion that Washington seize supplies from disaffected inhabitants, but it also urged certain states immediately to send collected clothing to headquarters. *JCC*, 9:905-7.

For Gen. Arthur St. Clair's vigorous criticism of the board's proposal to seize "Necessaries for the Army" from the disaffected inhabitants of Pennsylvania, which he penned in a November 13 letter to Robert Morris, see William Henry Smith, *The St. Clair Papers: The Life and Public Services of Arthur St. Clair*, 2 vols. (1882; reprint ed., Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1970), 1:458-59.

<sup>2</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:497-98.

## Elbridge Gerry to Timothy Pickering

My dear sir, York in Pennsylvania Novr 7. 1777

I should have communicated to Congress the Contents of your Favour of the 2d,<sup>1</sup> had any Mention been made by the Members of the Delay which the Circumstances of the Army necessarily occasioned in making the returns of your office. It is of great Importance that a particular Attention should be paid by each officer of the Army to this Business, as a Neglect hereof has been attended with manifest Inconveniences; but I am too well acquainted with your Industry & Care to suppose that any Delay has happened in your Departmt. that could be avoided. You will receive by this Conveyance an Evidence of the Confidence of Congress in your Integrity & Abilities, by their appointing You to the Office of a Member of the Board of War.<sup>2</sup> General Mifflin & Colo Harrison (the General's Secretary) are Commissioners with You. Expecting soon to see You here I remain sir with much Esteem yours sincerely, E Gerry

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup>Adjutant General Pickering's November 2 letter to Gerry explaining why he had been delayed in sending the returns of the army to Congress is in the Records of the Supreme Executive Council, PHaR.

<sup>2</sup>Pickering readily accepted his appointment to the Board of War and recommended Alexander Hamilton as his replacement as adjutant general. Pickering to Gerry, November 25, 1777, *ibid.*

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir, York Town 7th Novem. 1777

I had the honour of writing to you the 4th & 5th by the conveyance of the Express Wm. Jones since which Your Excellency's dispatch under the 1st & 3d Current with several inclosed Papers reached me, were immediately Reported to Congress & Committed to the Board of War.<sup>1</sup>

My present duty is to forward the following recited Minutes & Resolves.

Of the 1st Inst. for observing the 18th December next as a day of general Thanksgiving to Almighty God.

6th Inst. directing Your Excellency to settle the Ranks of Officers of Cavalry & to issue their Commissions.

Of the 24th & 31st July—25 November—12th & 27th December 1776—1st & 14 January 1777 relative to the Horse.<sup>2</sup>

To these I beg leave to refer & remain, with great regard & Esteem, sir, Your Excellency's Most obedient Servant.

Henry Laurens, Presidt. in Cong.

P.S. The Secretary this moment sent in a Resolve of Congress of this day—on General Mifflin's Resignation & the appointment of a Board of War which will go inclosed with the Papers above mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's November 1–3 letter is in PCC, item 152, 5:161–70, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:476–84.

<sup>2</sup> Congress sent all these resolutions about the cavalry to enable Washington to settle a dispute about rank between Cols. Theodorick Bland and Elisha Sheldon of the First and Second Continental Dragoons. See *JCC*, 9:861, 869, 872; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 9:29. See also John Penn to Theodorick Bland, December 1, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> This day Congress accepted Thomas Mifflin's resignation as quartermaster general but the next day asked him to remain in office until a successor had been chosen. *JCC*, 9:874, 882.

## Elbridge Gerry to Thomas Wharton

Dear Sir

York in Pennsylvania Novr 8. 1777

The following Books are much wanted by some Gentlemen of Congress, & are not to be procured in this Place; if they are to be found in the Pennsylvania Library, which We are informed is removed by Order of your Excellency to Lancaster, I shall be much obliged to You for the Loan thereof being with respect your Excellency's very huml sert,<sup>1</sup>

E Gerry

Vattel's Law of Nations

Grotius

Puffendorf <sup>2</sup>

RC (PHi). Addressed: "His Excellency Thomas Wharton Esqr. Lancaster."

<sup>1</sup> In his November 11 response Wharton informed Gerry that "the Library you Speak of was not removed, it still remains in the City for the edification of Tories." Wharton added that there was a library in Lancaster that might be willing to lend books to members of Congress. Gerry Papers, DLC.

Before Wharton responded, Daniel Roberdeau sent a request for the same works to Wharton on November 10. "A Committee of Congress have occasion of the under mentioned Law Books," Roberdeau explained, "which one of them sais were in the Library belonging to the State in Philada. Therefore I am desired to apply to you for the immediate Loan of them, and that they may be sent by express, if a good Opportunity does not very soon offer. If the books of the State were not brought to Lancaster you are requested to borrow these books of some Gentleman there and forward them." Continental Congress Miscellany, DLC; and *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 5:757.

<sup>2</sup> Emmerich de Vattel, *The Law of Nations or Principles of the Law of Nature Applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereignty*; Hugo Grotius, *On the Law of War and Peace*; and Samuel Pufendorf, *Of the Law of Nature and Nations*.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris

Gentlemen

York Town Pennsylvania Novr. 8th 1777

At the Time this will be delivered to you, Bills of Exchange will also be presented for your acceptance drawn by the Honorable Henry Laurens Esqr of Charlestown South Carolina who was elected President of the continental Congress on the first day of this Month; of which we thought proper to give you this early information that his Draughts may be duely honored, the Particulars of which we shall forward speedily by another opportunity,<sup>1</sup> concluding with much Regard, Gentlemen, Your most humb Servts,

Richard Henry Lee

James Lovell

RC (PPAmP). Written by Lee and signed by Lee and Lovell.

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Franklin's endorsement on this letter indicates that the "Particulars" were greatly delayed or did not reach the American commissioners. "Committee of Congress rec'd May 18. 1778. A former of same Date & Import, was receiv'd in January, but the Acct of Bills not yet come to hand."

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir,

York Town 8th Novem 1777.

I had the honour of writing to you the 5th by the Express William Dunn.

My present Duty is to forward the following recited Papers to which I beg leave to refer.

Resolves of Congress of the 5th Inst. for recovering & securing the possession of North River &ca, four Copies to be transmitted to the Eastern States respectively when you shall judge proper.<sup>1</sup>

Of the 6th for continuing Colo James Wilkinson in his present employment with a Brevet of Brigadier-General in the Army—and expressing the sense of Congress of the Merits of Doctor Potts & his assistants.<sup>2</sup>

Of the 1st Inst. appointing the 18th December next to be a day for General Thanksgiving.

Yesterday I had the pleasure of signing the Brevet for General Wilkinson properly dated. I have the honour to be with very great regard, sir, Your most obedient servt,

Henry Laurens, Presidt in Cong.

RC (NH*i*).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens transmitted the same resolves with a brief letter he wrote this day to Gov. George Clinton of New York. PCC, item 13, fol. 13.



<sup>2</sup> This day Laurens also wrote a brief letter to John Eustace, transmitting a commission as brevet major that Congress had awarded him on November 7 in recognition of his service "as aide-de-camp to General Lee and General Sullivan." *Ibid.*; and *JCC*, 9:875.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir, York Town Pennsylvania 8th Novm. 1777

Your Letter of the 20th Ultio. directed to the late President reached me the 6th Inst. was immediately Reported to Congress & committed.

Congress have confirmed several Resolutions relative to the Convention of Saratoga, one of which under this date, directing you to take the Name, Rank & Parol of every Commissioned Officer & the most ample Cognizance of the persons of every Non Commissioned Officer, private Soldier & other person in Massachusetts, comprehended in that agreement I have the honour of conveying to you under this Cover, to which I beg leave to refer.<sup>1</sup>

I am with great regard, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,  
Henry Laurens, President in Cong.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Congress passed this resolve in response to Gen. William Heath's October 25 letter, which described the difficulties he anticipated in handling the British prisoners who, according to the convention between Generals Burgoyne and Gates, were supposed to be marched to Boston and shipped back to England. See PCC, item 157, fols. 77-79; and *JCC*, 9:871, 881-82. Laurens erred in writing the date of Heath's letter as "the 20th Ultio."

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Mifflin

Sir, York Town 8th November 1777

You will find under cover of this, a Minute of Congress of yesterday, containing Resolves on your application to resign the Commissions of Major General and Quarter Master General in the Army & upon the appointment of a Board of War, in which you are included, 'tis the request of Congress that you be pleased to Signify your acceptance of a Commission in that Department, and enter upon the execution as Speedily as you conveniently can.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be with very great regard, Sir, your most Obt. Servt.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Citing reasons of health, Mifflin had submitted his resignation as quarter-master general and major general in an October 8 letter that Congress read on October 10. Congress decided on November 7 to accept Mifflin's resignation of

the first office but to continue him in the second "without the pay annexed to that office, until farther order of Congress." PCC, item 161, fol. 16; and *JCC*, 9:792, 874. See also the following entry.

This day Laurens also wrote virtually identical letters to Cols. Robert H. Harrison and Timothy Pickering, who had been chosen on November 7 to serve with Mifflin on the newly reorganized Board of War: "You will find under this cover a Minute of Congress of yesterday certifying your appointment to the Board of War. Tis the desire of Congress that you will be pleased to Signify your Acceptance of the Commission & Enter as Speedily as you can upon the Execution." PCC, item 13, fol. 12; and Timothy Pickering Papers, MHi. See also Laurens to Robert Howe, October 20, 1777, note 1.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Mifflin

Sir

York 8th November 1777

I had the honour of addressing you this morning by the hands of Genl. Washington; late this evening the appointment of a Quarter Master General being a Subject for consideration in Congress, the house determined to postpone the business and confirmed a Resolution to request you will continue in the Execution of that Office until a Quarter Master General shall be appointed and enter upon the Duty. A Copy of the Resolve will accompany this. I beg leave to refer to it, & remain with great respect, Sir, Your most obt. Servt.<sup>1</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens' next presidential letter was written on November 10 to Lancaster printer Francis Bailey, from whom he requested a variety of writing supplies. PCC, item 13, fol. 15.

## James Duane to George Clinton

Sir

York Town Pensylvania 9th November 1777

It is long since that I have been honoured with any of your Excellency's Favours tho' I never so anxiously wished for domestic Intelligence. It is true I am not at a Loss for the Reason; since the Irruption of our implacable Enemies under Sir Henry Clinton, the Attack of Forts Montgomerie & Clinton, and the burning of Kingston, must have given you full Employment. Happy is it under this Train of misfortunes that General Burgoine and his Army have fallen Victims to their Temerity! An example which will probably deter the British ministry from any future Attempt in that Quarter of our State! However grateful to the Supreme Being for this most manifest Interposition of his Providence; believe me, Sir, I feel very sensibly for my much respected Friends in Kingston, whose Virtue and publick spirit place them most deservedly in the highest Esteem with their Countrymen.

Congress, and I mention it with The utmost Satisfaction, are resolved at every Expence to maintain a sufficient Force for the protection and Security of the Passes in the high lands, and the Communication of Hudson's River;<sup>1</sup> and if it is in the Power of Art, I flater myself effectual means will be, with the utmost Expedition, employd for this most important Purpose.

The Respect paid to your Excellency in the Resolution of Congress for drawing Reinforcements for General Washington from the Northern Army, will give you an opportunity of offering your Sentiments with proper weight on a Subject which materially affects our State; & I have no doubt but that a sufficient Force will be left for our protection.<sup>2</sup>

General Washington has not Judged it adviseable to attack the Enemy in Philadelphia. His Superiority, in numbers, is not thought Sufficient to risk a general Engagement. If the Defences of the Delaware which have hitherto unexpectedly biden defiance to every effort of the Enemy Shoud stand firm, there seems but little doubt that the Enemy will soon experience the want of Provisions, as their Communication with the Country is already greatly intercepted & every means are exerted to cut it off entirely.

This may reduce General Howe to the necessity of abandoning Philadelphia. By all Accounts the Inhabitants already are extremely distressed & even are trembling for fear of Famine. There are Reports prevailing which woud lead us to imagine that such a Retreat is not far distant. But common Fame is so great a Deceiver that she has lost all Credit with me. Besides, the Reputation of Lord and General Howe, and the Honor of the British arms, woud be so essentially impaired by relinquishing their present Enterprize, that I am persuaded nothing but the most inevitable necessity will bring the Brothers to submit to the Disgrace of a Retreat. The Prospect of Famine, as I have suggested, will shake their Resolutions more than any other Consideration; but this can only be realized by a great Force and the utmost Vigilance on our part, and by a Continuance of that successful Gallantry and Perseverence in defending the Forts and obstructions in the Delaware which have foiled every attempt of the Enemy, altho' conducted by their favourite admiral & their favourite General and vigorously pushed both by Sea & Land.

General Burgoine's Letter to General Howe is already publishd in Philadelphia & the news paper has found it's way to our Camp tho' not to this place.<sup>3</sup> He says, in substance, that his orders were to proceed to Albany: that he suffered great Losses in successive Battles; that the number of effectives in his Army was reduced to 3500 of which 1900 only were British, and his provisions to three days short allowance. That by the advice of all his General & Field Officers & Captains commanding Regiments, he agreed to the Convention with General Gates which he hopes will not be thought dishonourable to

himself or the British nation, since he was surrounded by an Army of 16000 men. He adds, that rather than have submitted to the Terms General Gates first imposed he & his whole army were determined to have perished.

I am sorry to add that at a time when, with the Blessing of Heaven, one Vigorous and well conducted Enterprize would compel General Howe to follow the Example of General Burgoine, and this State alone has competent Resources to augment, strengthen and supply our Army to the utmost of our wishes; a fatal Langour prevails in all her Councils, and her military Exertions are so feeble, the Body of her Inhabitants so dissatisfied, or so intent upon Gain, that she in effect contributes next to nothing to the Common Cause.

Permit me now, Sir, to claim a moment's attention to the Request I have repeatedly made to be permitted to return to my native State. I have too high a sense of Duty to take this Liberty without the Consent of those who have honoured me with their Esteem and confidence. But the Reasons with which I have formerly troubled your Excellency, the advanced Season of the year, and my long and faithful Services, entitle me I hope to this Indulgence, independent of the assurances that were made me in Convention that I should be relieved in three or four months. Mr Duer is equally solicitous to attend his private Affairs as well as his publick Accounts which suffer much by his long Absence. And we both wait impatiently for a Representation from our State. Every thing which might be expected from the little advantages of my Experience has been obtained, the Confederation which was the last Object being finished except in a few points, and these not very material, & capable of being dispatched in a few days.

Wishing anxiously for the favour of a Line from your Excellency in answer to this & three former Dispatches which have not been noticed, I have the Honour to be, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient & most humble servt,

Jas. Duane

P.S. I beg your Excellency to excuse my Incorrectness. Believe me I have no time to transcribe my Letters being obliged to attend the Treasury board every morning & Congress twice every day, often till 9 oCl in the Evening.

RC (CSmH).

<sup>1</sup> See the November 5 resolves on this subject in *JCC*, 9:865-67.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 9:865.

<sup>3</sup> A text of Burgoyne's October 20 letter to Howe is in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 63-65.



## William Duer to George Clinton

Sir, York Town Pensa. Novr. 9th. 1777

Notwithstanding I have had for some time Leave of Absence to return to New York, I have forbore availing myself of it, till such time as I was relived by one of the other Delegates not chusing at a very important Crisis to leave the State unrepresented.

By my long Absence in Convention, and in Congress my private Affairs have got into the utmost Anarchy and Confusion, and my Health, though somewhat mended from what it was a month since, much Impaird. I therefore flatter myself that you will be kind enough to inform the Council of Safety, that I shall not be able, consistent with the Duty I owe to myself to stay at this Place longer than the 25th Inst. and to urge them to send proper Persons to represent the State. Before that Time I am certain that the Articles of Confederation will be completed in Congress, as at this Day, there is only one or two clauses remaining for Decision.

I trust that you, Sir, and the honorable Council will do me the Justice to think that nothing but the most urgent Necessity could induce me to leave the State unrepresented in Congress. I trust however that Mr. Gouver. Morris will be here before I quit this Place.

I am, Sir, with very great Respect, Your Excellency's and the Council's most Obedt. Hble. Servt. Wm Duer

RC (PHi).

## James Duane to George Clinton

Sir, York Toun Pensyl. 10th Nov. 1777

I wrote to your Excellency yesterday & have nothing to add but that a Report prevails here that the Enemy made another attack on the Forts in the Delaware last Wednesday and were again repulsed with Loss. I hope to be able soon to send you the particulars of what you be assur'd, if true, is a truly favourable & critical Event, & beyond my Expectation.

I am with very great Respect Sir your Excellency's most Obedient & very hum'e Servant. Jas. Duane

P.S. Be pleased to forward the enclos'd to General Schuyler by a safe opportunity.

MS not found; reprinted from Clinton, *Papers* (Hastings), 2:511-12.

## James Lovell to Abigail Adams

York Town Novr. 10th. 1777

As the delivery of this Billet cannot be attended with the disagreeable allarm which the amiable Mrs. Adams some time ago suffered from a well meant but indiscretely-managed little Compliment of one of her Admirers,<sup>1</sup> I improve this fair opportunity to congratulate her, thus, upon the late happy events at Saratoga, greatly important to the Public and, consequently, interesting to her patriotic mind. At the same time, I wish her many years continuance of that domestic Felicity which will be restored to her at the hour when she receives this written assurance of affectionate Esteem from her very humble Servant,

James Lovell

RC (MHi). Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:365.

<sup>1</sup> For Abigail's explanation of her fright at receiving Lovell's August 29 letter to her, see her letters to Lovell and to her husband, *ibid.*, pp. 343-44. It is obvious from Lovell's comments here and below that John Adams hand carried this letter to Braintree.

Robert Morris to the  
Pennsylvania Council of Safety

Gentn.

Lancaster November 11th. 1777.

It is now three Years since I have devoted nearly the whole of my time to the Public service, and have almost entirely neglected my own Affairs which being very extensive at that period have consequently run into a good deal of Confusion and as the circumstances of my Partner are so very different from my own I have concluded to put an end to the Copartnership & wind up the business of the House. You must be sensible this will require the command of a good deal of time and I am therefore under a necessity of requesting your leave of Absence as a Delegate in Congress for this State for Six Months, but at all times I shall most chearfully give such attendance as may be necessary to prevent any of the Public business heretofore under my Care from suffering and indeed I propose to adjust some of the Public Accounts that cannot be done whilst my attention is engaged in the House.<sup>1</sup> I have the honor to remain with the greatest respect, Your honours, Most obedt. hble. Servt.

Robt Morris

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> In approving Morris' request, the council of safety this day replied: "This Commonwealth will dispense with your personal attendance in Congress for Six Months; at the same time I am also to acquaint you that as often as the other engagements mentioned in your application will admit & the Necessity of publick

affairs, with which you have been more immediately connected may require, you will give your attendance." *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser., 5:760. As his correspondence in this volume of delegate letters will attest, Morris did indeed continue to devote considerable time to congressional affairs the following six months.

That Morris viewed the council's approval of his request for leave as a respite is nevertheless clear from his November 16 letter to John Bradford, the Continental prize agent at Boston. "I hope Mr. Hancock and you," Morris wrote, "have had a joyous meeting. Pray tell him I went to Lancaster on purpose to see him the day before he got there which I thought extremely unlucky as I wished to have brought him hither. Tell him I have not been able to get a dismission from Congress, but have for the present obtained a six months leave of absence so that after one visit to York, I expect to have command of more time than has fallen to my lot for some years." *Franklin Papers*, CiY.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear Son

York Town 12 November 1777

Your favor of the 5th Inst.<sup>1</sup> was brought to me last Saturday Evening by the Chev Le Frey or as he is sometimes styled the Baron. The extracts from the Philadelphia Gazette being new afforded much amusement. The avidity of people for intelligence brought not only Members of Congress but scores of out of door applicants, to beg a reading—for bare rehearsal will not satisfy. Hence you will learn that the printed Papers as often as you can obtain them will be very acceptable, but before I take my attention from your Letter give me leave to ask you what is the Exchange of "Kitean."<sup>2</sup> I was forced to read with out understanding it, my only consolation was in finding every body to whom my modesty appealed as ignorant as Your Citizonian humble servant.

Cul de Sac, how can we expect such an event while the Jersey Shore is accessible & the Country open to an uninterrupted March.<sup>3</sup>

RC (MHi: William Gilmore Simms Collection deposit, 1973).

<sup>1</sup> This letter is in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 62–69.

<sup>2</sup> In the letter cited above, John Laurens had alluded to "Sr Wm Howe's Kitean harangue to such he would delude into the loyal corps of which he has reserved to himself the Colonelcy." In response to his father's request for clarification of this allusion, John explained on November 18: "The little innovation in the epithet applied to Genl Howe's oration, I took the liberty of forming from Kite, a character in the comedy of the Recruiting Officer, and meant to draw a parallel between the sergeant's harangue and that of the General—but upon reflection I believe I have done the former an injustice—who confined his promises to more practicable things." *Ibid.*, pp. 78–79.

<sup>3</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Laurens to Laurens, November 15, 1777.

## Marine Committee to the Eastern Navy Board

Gentlemen

November 12th 1777

We have received Mr Warrens favour of the 4th & 7th ultimo informing us of the loss of the Brigantine Hampden, and we have no doubt but care has been taken to save as much of that Vessels materials as possible. Should you think what has been saved of those materials worthy of another Hull we would have you purchase One, provided it can be done on reasonable Terms, and that you get one every way well calculated for a Cruizer; particularly in point of sailing as that is a most material object with us. Mr. Bradford the agent at Boston hath lately advised us of the arrival of a Prize Brigantine called the Industrious Bee which he thinks would be suitable for a Cruizer. You will please to order a Court of enquiry on Captain Burroughs and his Pilot and if the Captain is acquitted and you purchase the Hull as above advised we would have the command given to him and when ready for Sea you will dispatch him on a Cruize the most likely for Success.<sup>1</sup> Enclosed are some Resolves of Congress which you will please to have published in all the Eastern Papers. Mr Cushing informs the 36 Gun Ship will soon be launched, but that he knows of no provision of Guns for her. That matter is under your direction and you will use every possible means to Obtain them, and inform us as soon as may be what probability you have of succeeding therein and upon what terms; and you will see that all materials are provided for intire equipement for Sea and that all possible dispatch be given. The Expençe of the Navy is very great, but every delay adds to the charge and deprives the States of that advantage over our enemies, and of those supplies which are the great ends of their destination. We sent you by Docter Lynn warrants upon the Loan Offices of Massachusetts and Rhode Island to the amount of 100,000 Dollars which we hope considering the present applications for Monies from every quarter will for a time answer the demands on your Department. We are extreemly sorry to find such heavy complaints against Captain McNeill and we hope that Gentleman will be able to justify his conduct but as a Court Martial must be hereafter appointed for that purpose as well as for doing justice to the publick, we cannot consent in the mean time that the public Service should suffer, in addition therefore to what we have already in our formed Letter said to you on that subject we must add, that if you apprehend the services will be injured by Captain McNeills remaining in the command of the Boston, you will suspend him till his conduct respecting his last Cruize is properly enquired into.<sup>2</sup> Should this be done, you will put a person in command of her, the best qualified and most deserving you can procure being already in Commission perhaps you'll find none more deserving than Captain Olney;<sup>3</sup> and



you will also establish all such Officers in her, as have been in her the last Cruize who from proper inquiry you shall judge adequate to their Stations, notwithstanding any suspensions or arrests of Capt. McNeill. We have sent by Captain Palmes warrants in favour of Mr. Daniel Tillinghast Continental Agent at Providence for 44,000 Dollars and an order in his favour on the Honble Stephen Hopkins Esq for 15,926 Dollars & 8/9ths, which we hope will answer the sums he has hitherto advanced. We shall direct him to exhibit his Account to you till the first of November from the time of his last Accounts exhibited to us. You will examine his vouchers and then transmit his account to us with such observations thereon as may Occur to you, in Order that we may settle the same to that time, after which he will from time to time settle his Accounts with, and make all applications for direction &c to you.

As you have Authority so we approve of the Exchange of any officers from one Ship to another as the service may require, and we doubt not you had sufficient reasons for the Exchange of Captain Granis for Captain Palmes.<sup>4</sup>

We are sorry to hear the expedition against Rhode Island was likely to prove unsuccessful, but we hope the getting the Frigates out of Providence River will not depend upon that circumstance. Fully relying on your utmost exertions in that object as well as in every other in your department, We remain Gentlemen, your hble Servants

P.S. Captain Palmes having lost his Horse on the Road, and being obliged to purchase another as he informs us, and not being in Cash to defrey his Expences on his return, On his application we have advanced him 200 Dollars and taken his receipt therefor duplicatt whereof signed by him we inclose you in Order that you properly settle with him, referring to you how far he ought to be considered as to his loss, & Charges.

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> On December 16 the board voted that a letter be written to the Marine Committee acknowledging receipt of this letter and enclosing the report of the court of enquiry that cleared Ezekiel Burroughs and his pilot Joseph Roach of negligence in the loss of the *Hampden*. "Votes & Resolutions of the Navy Board of the Eastern department," Continental Congress Collection, DLC.

<sup>2</sup> See Marine Committee to the Eastern Navy Board, October 26, 1777, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> On December 27 the board appointed Samuel Tucker to take command of the *Boston*; it was not until July 24, 1779, that the Marine Committee selected Joseph Olney for command of the *Queen of France*. "Votes & Resolutions," Continental Congress Collection, DLC; and Paullin, *Marine Committee Letters*, 1:273.

<sup>4</sup> On October 3 the board had ordered the exchange of Richard Palmes, captain of marines on the *Boston*, and John Grannis, captain of marines on the *Warren*, because of the friction between McNeill and Palmes. After McNeill's suspension Palmes was ordered on December 29 to return to duty on the *Boston*. "Votes & Resolutions," Continental Congress Collection, DLC; and William J. Morgan, *Captains to the Northward* (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishing Co., 1959), pp. 95-96.

## Elbridge Gerry to James Warren

My dear sir

York in Pennsylvania, Novr. 13. 1777

I am favoured with yours of Octr 23d,<sup>1</sup> & find that in the Enjoyment of the News of General Burgoyne's Surrender, You somewhat regretted General Gates's "suffering himself to be drawn into a Convention." I must confess that when the News first reached this Place, I had similar Feelings, but was somewhat reconciled upon hearing the particulars as delivered by his D. Adjutant General to Congress. It seems that General Clinton with his intended Reinforcement to Burgoyne, at the Time of the Treaty, was within a Day's Sail of Albany, where were the Magazines, Hospitals, & Laboratory of the northern army. This Gates knew, & not being able to detach Troops in Time to defend them, hazarded the Loss of the Whole. His D. A. General further says, that he had but 3 Days Provisions at Saratoga & had Albany been taken, must have retreated without Delay or have starved his Army. But what made the Matter still more critical, Sir Harry Clinton had conveyed Intelligence to Burgoyne, which the latter recd the Day before the Ratification of the Convention, informing him of Clinton's Expectations of relieving him in a few Days, & thereupon General Burgoyne made some cavils & finally informed Colo Wilkinson (the Adjutant mentioned) that Hostilities must again commence; but the latter informing as he left him that General Gates could not be responsible for the Consequences, as his Men considering their General deceived (the Treaty had been several Days upon the Tapis) were highly enraged & zealous for Action, was recalled by G. Burgoyne & desired to favour him with a little further Time to consider of the Matter, which being granted soon ended in his agreeing to the Convention. However was I to judge of the Matter under Circumstances as they respect Gates alone, without recurring to the primary Cause of our Successes, It appears to me that such a powerful Army as he had were intitled to the Terms first demanded "a Surrender of the other Army Prisoners of War." But we have ever had the greatest Reason to acquiesce in the Determinations of providence relative to our publick as well as private Concerns, & therefore I find myself very happy on the Occasion.

We have this Evening finished the Confederacy, & it will be shortly sent to the several States for their Consideration.<sup>2</sup>

My Expectations from Rhode Island were never great for Reasons too obvious to mention; but I am concerned that the Honor of so many brave Men as composed the eastern Army, should suffer from a Circumstance which they could not foresee or avoid. A thorough Enquiry must be made into this Matter; if We mean to correct such Misconduct, & prevent the like in future.<sup>3</sup>

Our Friends the Mr. Adams left this two Days since,<sup>4</sup> & inclosed are two Letters for Mr. J. Adams, which I must request You to

deliver him. Agreeable to his Desire, that I would open such Letters as should be directed to him here, I opened these, & finding the largest written by what appears to me a female Hand; if so, I presume it is from his Lady, & must ask her pardon for the Error into which her Friend betrayed me. The Absence of these Gentlemen occasions a Chasm in Congress, who employed the microscopic Eye of the One to penetrate the obscure Designs of intriguing Adversaries & the deep Erudition of the other to raise Barriers against them. My compliments to them & other Friends & beleive me to be, yours sincerely,  
E Gerry

P.S. The Enemy appear to be making great preparations to attack Fort Mifflin. I hope the brave Fellows there will not fall a sacrifice to superior Numbers. Quere, ought not Attention to be diverted by occasional Visits from our Army?

RC (Justin G. Turner, Los Angeles, Calif., 1971).

<sup>1</sup> Warren's October 23 letter to Gerry is in Gardiner, *Warren-Gerry Correspondence*, pp. 91-92.

<sup>2</sup> This day Congress appointed a committee "to revise and arrange the articles of confederation agreed to, and to prepare a circular letter to the respective states to accompany the said articles." *JCC*, 9:900.

<sup>3</sup> See Henry Laurens to the Rhode Island Expedition Commissioners, December 15, 1777.

<sup>4</sup> John and Samuel Adams had been granted leave of absence on November 7. Their return trip to Massachusetts can be traced in the former's diary entries. See *JCC*, 9:880; and Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield), 2:267-69.

## Cornelius Harnett to Thomas Burke

Dear Sir

York Pennsylvania Novr. 13. 1777

The Child Congress has been big with these two Years past, is at last brought forth (Confederation). I fear it will by several Legislatures be thought a little deformed, you will think it a Monster. I wish however some kind of Confederation might take place, many Carry their Ideas of this Matter so far as to believe Our Affairs must be ruined without it; Be this as it may it will in a few days be sent to the Legislatures of the Several States. Nothing more has been done worth your notice. Our time has been chiefly employed in Army matters and God knows we have had perplexity enough.

Genl. Washingtons head Quarters are at White Marsh a few miles from German Town & the Picketts of each army are very near together. We are informed of a large Reinforcement detached from G. Gates Army on their way to join the main Army, & every body hopes a Good account will still be given of Sir William. You left us dissatisfied but when you hear that we still have the Command of the River—Burgoyns whole Army Surrendered—the Noble defence made

at Red-bank, Fort Mifflin, &c you will I hope entertain an opinion that Our Armies must conquer wherever they appear notwithstanding the few Checks (perhaps necessary ones) they have lately met with. We have an Account of 30 Transports sailing from New York supposed to bring a reinforcement of troops to Genl. Howe. They are not as yet arrived in the Delaware.

I think as soon as Our main Army receives the reinforcements expected, I should *expect* to hear of a Vigorous Attack on the Enemy, but I am no General.

At the Battle of German Town I am informed Coll Martin has again been so unfortunate as to meet with Censure. He has been tryed by a Court Martial & Acquitted as I hear;<sup>1</sup> Since the death of our worthy & brave Nash, I have received a Letter from Coll Sumner shewing the Necessity of having a Brigadier appointed. What can your Delegates do in this Case? For Gods sake endeavour to get our Assembly to nominate the Gentlm they would Choose. I am told by several Officers that should Coll Martin be appointed, many resignations would take place as several of the Collonels &c are much dissatisfied with his Conduct. Coll Sumner is I believe next in Rank, a worthy Man. Our Brigade will as soon as Coll Shephard arrives at Camp be a very Respectable One Consisting of 2000 Rank & file. I wish to see Some one or more of my Countrymen at the head of them & hope they may be esteemed in Camp, & out of it, as our worthy Deceased friend was. The sooner one or more Genl. Officers is appointed the better. Indeed we have a right to the Appointment of a Major Genl for our State should it be thought necessary.<sup>2</sup> Pray let me have your opinion freely & *dispassionately* on the Articles of Confederation. The Mode of Settling the Quota of each State towards defraying the Genl. Expence has taken up much time. Some States were for the Valuation of all the property in each State; Others for fixing it by the Number of inhabitants; Others, on the Value of lands. This Last seemed to come as near the mark as any except a Valuation of all property, however the Value of Lands has taken place, much against the desire of the delegates from the Eastern States.<sup>3</sup>

As I expect you will be directed to return immediately after the rising of Our Assembly, I hope you will take Care to be properly instructed in every Measure they may wish to Accomplish. You ought to be here, no State should have a less number of Delegates than three present in Congress & I hope Our State will Attend Constantly to that rule.

I have a great inclination to return home & wish to be in future excused from this kind of Service. Between you and I we shall be ruined in it, & I wish to make way for some Gentm who values his honor *in this way*, at a much higher rate than I do. I have not time to say one word more than to desire you'll make my Compliments to All my friends in Assembly. I wrote Mr. Hooper & Maclain a few days



ago,<sup>4</sup> & shall write them again very soon. No Post or Press as yet established here & when I meet with an Opportunity to write my friends I am obliged to do it in such hurry that I hardly know what I write. Believe me to be with unfeigned Esteem, Dr Sir, Your affec & ob Servt,

Cornl Harnett

[P.S.] Our very worthy friend Mrs. Trist is well at Lancaster. I just now received a line from her. I forwarded a Letter from her to you about a fortnight ago which I hope you have received.

RC (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> See Henry Laurens to John Wells, October 20, 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> On December 15, 1777, the North Carolina General Assembly instructed the North Carolina delegates to nominate Cols. Thomas Clark and Jethro Sumner for the rank of brigadier general. The delegates submitted their names to Congress on February 10 and December 29, 1778, but Congress took no action until January 9, 1779, when, largely owing to the machinations of Thomas Burke, it elected Sumner and James Hogun as North Carolina brigadier generals. See *JCC*, 10:142, 12:1260, 13:46; *N.C. State Records*, 12:309; and Hugh F. Rankin, *The North Carolina Continentals* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), pp. 167-68.

<sup>3</sup> See *JCC*, 9:801.

<sup>4</sup> Not found.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dr Sir

York Pennsylvania Novr. 13. 1777

As Our General Assembly are now setting in New Bern I only trouble you with a Letter to Mrs. Harnett.<sup>1</sup> As for News I inclose you only the Printed papers of which I sent you a Copy before, but lest they should not have come to yr. hands I send Duplicates. Genl. Washington is to be reinforced from G Gates's Victorious army, they are hourly expected to arrive at head Quarters. On the Other hand Genl Howe we are informed is to be reinforced from N York, as 30 Transports have sailed from Sandy Hook which are expected at Philadelphia. We still keep, with our little forts & fleet, the Command of the river. It is Expected another Grand Push is soon to be made by the Enemy against Red Bank &c in that Quarter. All our Garrisons have been lately very strongly reinforced & should this Grand attack take place a severe Conflict must ensue, we have every Thing to hope from Our Brave Officers & men in that Quarter & I think nothing to fear. We are informed the Inhabitants of the City begin to be greatly distressed for want of the Necessaries of Life, some I *pity*, Others perhaps deserve this Calamity, in a very short time it is hoped the Enemy will not be able to procure any Supplies for their Army either by land or Water. Remember me to all My Friends, you know them *perhaps* better than I do.

Get your Vessels out of the river in time so as to make two Voyages during the winter, the risque is allowed to be in Winter only as one to three compared with a Summers Voyage. But these Matters I leave to the Gents. Concerned—Submitting to their Judgement whither at such times as these trade should not be pursued with Vigour & dispatch, as well as War. I am with real esteem, first of all tilling you that Jackey is alive and well, Dr Sir, Your since. friend & Obt Servt,  
Cornl Harnett

[P.S.] Should you be Overburthened with Money, Mrs. Harnetts receipt I hope you will Conceive equal with my own, for any sum you choose to pay her on the Copartnership Account. As to Continental Currency, I would as soon have the Currency of Our Own Country. I can buy a bottle of wine I believe in Wilmington Cheaper for Our Currency, than I can here for Congress Money. Whoever drinks Madiera here pay 30/ per Bottle. We have no press.

RC (NeU).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir

York 13th November 1777

Since my last of the 7th I have had the honour of reporting to Congress your Excellency's favors of the 8th & 10th Curr.<sup>1</sup>

The Chairman of the Treasury Board in answer to my pressing intreaty for dispatch to replenish your military Chest has desired me to inform Your Excellency "that from the removal of the Office from Baltimore & Philadelphia the Money department has been greatly obstructed but that the utmost diligence Shall be exerted to forward a Supply of Money to the pay Master General as soon as possible."

Our Treasury is nearly exhausted a circumstance the more unfortunate as it happens in the moment when demands have conspired which exceed all former Sudden Calls. I trust there will be no necessity for further urging the Board; if there Should be, I will not fail to do every thing proper on my part to ward off all the impending Evil of being more deeply involved in Arrears to the Army.

I return the most Sincere thanks for your Excellency's polite compliments on my appointment to the Chair in Congress, a determination equally unthought of & undesired by me, former experiments had instructed me to know & to wish to shun the labour & variety of trouble attendant upon a faithful discharge of the Duty of president.<sup>2</sup> While I continue in that Office & enjoy the honour of your Excellency's correspondence & confidence, it will be impossible for me to be wittingly deficient in any mark of Esteem for a Character, which, after holding near twenty Years in a respectable light, I have learnt to

revere. Let me also assure your Excellency, there are no incentives which could prevail on me to Spend another day of the fragment of my Life in this or any public station, but the Love of Country.

I am indeed conscious of the narrowness of my abilities for discharging the trust reposed in me with a propriety even to my own Satisfaction, I nevertheless dare trust my Self for diligence, integrity &, at all hazards, for an unwearied attention to the Interests of the United States of America.

Sir, I am incapable of flattering, I hope incapable of an approach to the view, but I should be ungrateful, or unfeeling, if I did not add, that I am perfectly happy under a persuasion that every error or failure of duty which may appear in the process of my present Task will be interpreted & considered by your Excellency with that Candor for which you have ever been distinguished.

Congress from all appearance are well satisfied with the measures taken by your Excellency with respect to the Frigates above Philadelphia & the disposition of part of the Northern Army, the Resolves of the 5th were certainly formed while an opinion prevailed that Fort Clinton was garrisoned by the Enemy & apprehensions of their gaining a formidable footing on Hudson's River fixed in every mind.<sup>3</sup>

Your Excellency will receive with this, a packet containing Commissions for the Field Officers of the Pennsylvania Regiments in Conformity with the arrangement by the Board of Officers, this business has occasioned some delay of the present Express, it was reported to me that there were no blanks & I was under that mistake obliged to Send to Lancaster for a new impression. The Resolutions of Congress on that branch will accompany the Commissions.

14th. While I was attending Congress this Morning your Excellency's Letter of the 11th was brought into the House & reported.<sup>4</sup> A Report relative to Claims by French Officers happened to be a Subject in debate which continued till adjournment,<sup>5</sup> I am now returning to Duty in the Same place & will apply for directions what answer to return on the important article of Clothing.

It is a Rule in Congress to commit Letters to the consideration of particular Boards, these being dispersed in different parts of the Town & governed by Rules of their own for meeting, it is not always or I should rather Say, 'tis Seldom in the power of the President to answer with that dispatch which may Seem necessary, this may give no information to your Excellency, yet my being uncertain in that particular, I think the intimation not improper in order to account for any apparent omission on my part. Under Cover with this your Excellency will find Copies of Resolves of Congress.

The 10th Inst directing Your Excellency to cause a Strict enquiry to be made into the conduct of Lt. Reynolds as set forth in certain depositions to which the Resolve is annexed.

11th. Ordering Commissions to be granted to Officers in the department of the Commissary general of Military Stores. The Commissions are Issued accordingly.

14th. Relative to Clothing for the Army & continuing the powers with which Your Excellency was vested on the 17th September last to the 1st March next unless Sooner revoked.

14th. Permitting General Schuyler to attend to his private affairs till further Notice.

To the Same effect respecting General St. Clair with the addition of an Order that a Warrant Issue for 150000 Dollars to be remitted to William Bedlow Esquire deputy paymaster at Fish Kill.<sup>6</sup>

It may not be amiss to intimate to your Excellency that the liberty granted to Major General Schuyler followed a Motion founded on a Letter received by a Member of Congress<sup>7</sup> from the General, *that* to Major General Sinclair proceeded from the appearance of his Name Subscribed at a meeting of a board of Officers & by Special order I am to transmit a Copy of that Resolve to himself.

The Resolve relative to Clothing backed by a Second Address to Several of the Neighbouring States<sup>8</sup> will Shew that Congress have not been inattentive to the necessities of the Army, whatever remissness may appear elsewhere, there are parcels of Clothing at New Orleans, at Charles Town & at Boston the property of the United States, measures are now taken which I hope will bring the whole forward & some parts very soon. Besides these I this morning dispatched Orders to Boston for purchasing in private hands a quantity of Clothing Sufficient as Major Genl. Heath has informed for about 10000 Men & also a large quantity of Shoes. The Public are indebted to the vigilance of Major Genl. Heath for this discovery. He not only Sent Notice by an Express Messenger that Such articles were to be purchased at Newberry Port & Salem but has Secured a preference to Congress. Upon this very important occasion I will move Congress for leave to Send duplicates by a Second Express in order to guard against possible accidents of delay or miscarriage.

A report was this morning made by the Board of War on the "Opinion of the Officers of the Virginia Line" & recommitted.<sup>9</sup>

Among other papers in the present dispatch will be found a packet containing Nine intercepted Letters for persons with the Enemy, these have been inspected & are now Submitted to your Excellency's disposal.

Congress have ordered additional Sums to be paid to the French Gentleman of Mr. Du Coudray's suite & Some others. Resolved to give Monsr. St. Colombe a Captain's Commission & appear determined to Stop there.<sup>10</sup> Some who are not provided for, I fear will be reduced to piteous circumstances & must be relieved from private purses or suffer the most grievous inconveniencies.

I remain with the greatest respect & esteem.



LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). There are no RC's of Laurens' presidential letters to Washington in the Washington Papers, DLC, between the dates November 7, 1777, and January 27, 1778.

<sup>1</sup> These letters are in PCC, item 152, 5:173-76, 181-82, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:22-23, 33-36.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens had been president of several provincial committees and councils in South Carolina since 1775.

<sup>3</sup> In his November 10 letter Washington had pointed out that this "opinion" was no longer valid.

<sup>4</sup> This letter is in PCC, item 152, 5:187-90, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:36-39.

<sup>5</sup> This day Congress approved the report of the committee on "the commissioned and non-commissioned officers who accompanied Monsr. du Coudray from France." *JCC*, 9:903-5.

<sup>6</sup> Laurens also transmitted copies of the last two resolves to Gens. Arthur St. Clair and Philip Schuyler with brief letters that he wrote to them on November 14. PCC, item 13, fols. 28-29; and *JCC*, 9:901.

<sup>7</sup> James Duane. See Duane to Philip Schuyler, November 19, 1777.

<sup>8</sup> Congress ordered the preparation of such an "Address" on November 15. *JCC*, 9:906-7.

<sup>9</sup> Congress apparently approved the Board of War report referred to here on November 26. *JCC*, 9:967.

<sup>10</sup> Congress took the actions described in this paragraph on November 15. *JCC*, 9:930-31.

## Marine Committee to John Deshon

Sir

November 13th. 1777

We have received yours of the 26th of October and altho we have very unfavourable Accounts of the expedition upon Rhode Island yet we are glad to find the Continental Ships in Providence River are so nearly fit for Sea and hope their getting out will not depend on the Success of that expedition. The getting those Ships out is an object of very great importance<sup>1</sup> and we learn there were but two Ships in the Bays when Captain Palmes left Providence. We are in hopes that one of the Ships at least has already sailed we had sent forward before Captain Palmes Arrived Loan Office Certificates for 100,000 dollars by Doctor Lynn which we hope will answer for the present necessitys. The calls for Money are pressing on every side. However we shall endeavour as much as possible to support the important department entrusted to the direction of the Navy Board.<sup>2</sup> We shall write more at large to the Navy Board and in the mean time remain, Sir, Your hble Servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book). Addressed: "John Deshon Esqr. at Providence."

<sup>1</sup> The British blockade of the lower Narragansett Bay kept the frigates *Providence* and *Warren* sealed in throughout 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Deshon was a member of the Eastern Navy Board.

## Marine Committee to Daniel Tillinghast

Sir

November 13th 1777

Yours of the 27th of October inclosing a Copy of your Letter of the 13th we have received. Some particular circumstances together with the removal of Congress prevented the signing and forwarding the Letter now enclosed of the 10th of September<sup>1</sup> and the order of that date on the Honble Stephen Hopkins Esqr. for 15,926 8/9ths Dollars also the obtaining any further Moneys for you. With that order we now inclose you a warrant on the Loan Office for the State of Rhode Island for 44,000 Dollars for which you are to be accountable and which we hope will answer present emergencies.

You will present your accounts and vouchers from the last charge of your accounts heretofore exhibited to us to the 1st of November to the Navy Board of the Eastern Department who we have directed to examine the same and thereupon to transmit the account to us in order that the same may be settled after which you will be pleased from time to time to apply to that Board for settlements and for any directions necessary for your conduct when you shall not have received particular directions from the Marine Committee.<sup>2</sup>

We enclose you the Order of the Court of Appeals reversing the judgment in the case of Hopkins against Darby upon the Brigantine Kingston Packet.<sup>3</sup> We are glad to hear the Frigates are in such readiness for putting to sea. This is an Object of great importance and we hope the attainment of it will not depend upon the intended attempt upon Rhode Island as we hear that Expedition in all probability has turned out unsuccessful but from what causes we are yet ignorant.

We are Sir, Your hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> See Marine Committee to Stephen Hopkins, September 10, 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> This day the Marine Committee gave similar directions to Thomas Cushing, who was overseeing the building of the Continental frigates in Massachusetts: "You will on all occasions apply to the Navy Board of the Eastern Department for advice, Instructions and necessary Moneys for completing your Agency. We are glad to hear the 36 Gun Ship is so far advanced, we shall give Instructions to the Navy Board for providing her Guns and every other necessary for her equipment." Paullin, *Marine Committee Letters*, 1:172.

<sup>3</sup> Legal records pertaining to the case of the *Kingston Packet* (*Derby v. Hopkins*) are in Records of the Supreme Court of the United States, Record Group 267, case no. 6, DNA.

## Pennsylvania Delegates to Thomas Wharton

Sir

York Town Novr. 13th. 1777

Congress have refered the enclosed Petition to the Council of this State, together with which we were desired to furnish a more particular account of the Petitioner, Parson Batwell's state of health &c, accordingly we have just visited him, and found him a Prisoner in a private house much emaciated, and afflicted with Rhumatic pains in his Knees, which incapacitates him for walking, but confessed he was much better than while he was in prison.<sup>1</sup> He offers his parole as well as Bail if he is allowed to go to his former place of aboad in this County, twenty one miles distant from hence, or permitted to take the fresh Air, and exercise here, for the recovery of his health, which we are of opinion may effect it. He requests a speedy result of your Honble Board that he may sell or remove his Effects and three Children now at the above place, a Glebe belonging to the Church, as he cannot afford to keep two families. The Papers belonging to Mr. Batwell taken with his person were deposited in the hands of Mr. McClane in this Town,<sup>2</sup> who applied to one of us to know how they should be disposed of, which was moved to Congress, but they would give no orders concerning them, therefore they wait your Commands, and are as yet undisclosed, except two letters of no great importance communicated to one of us.

We have the happiness to inform the State that Confederation has this Evening passed Congress, but have it not in our power as yet to communicate it, as the several articles tho agreed to are not arranged in the order they are to appear, which we hope will be effected tomorrow, as they are committed for that purpose, and to have it in our power very soon to lay them before the State, therefore we ardently wish a full representation of the State may be convened to receive them, and that a Determination upon them may be speedy, as the ratification in our opinion is of infinite importance to the Independance of America. We are respectfully, Sir, Yr. most obt & very huml Servts.

Wm Clingan

Daniel Roberdeau

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> Rev. Daniel Batwell's November 7 petition to Congress is in *Pa. Archives*, 2d ser. 3:141. For other documents pertaining to the imprisonment and parole of Batwell, a former missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel assigned to Cumberland and York Counties, Pa., whose case had been before Congress since early October, see *ibid.*, pp. 126-30, 133-34; and *JCC*, 8:759. See also Daniel Roberdeau to George Bryan, December 29, 1777, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Archibald McClean, whose activities against the "disaffected" residents of York County can be traced in *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 5:514-20, 536-38, 575-77, 661-63, 682-83, 704-5.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir,

York Town 14 Novem 1777.

Four days ago I had the honour of Reporting to Congress your favors of the 30 & 31st past by Wm. Fowler, who has been detained here for a New Impression of blank Commission from Lancaster, of such you will now receive fifty.<sup>1</sup> If these are not sufficient for the purposes intended an addition will be made upon the first requisition from you. When these Commissions are Issued you will be so good as to transmit a return in order that proper records may be Entered in the War Office.

Inclosed you will find a Resolve of Congress touching the subject of paying the Troops for Rations which implies an approbation of the measures you had pursued in that branch, restricting the practice within the bounds of necessity to be determined by your judgement.<sup>2</sup> Congress have not considered the necessity for sending any of its Members to liquidate extra Accounts. I shall remind the House again of the subject that at least somewhat more explicit may be said than I am authorized to offer at present.

On the subject of Money, when I pressed the Chairman of the Treasury to send you an immediate supply, he informed me that 200,000 Dollars were on the way to you when you wrote, besides the Order for the like Sum on the Connecticut Loan Office, that 200,000 Dollars more is provided for your department & that with all possible expedition a further supply shall be sent. Demands for a greater Sum than ever was called for at one time, have at this juncture conspired to impoverish the treasury. The business there has also been greatly obstructed by the removal of Congress but is now restored again to good order & the fund will soon be replenished.

I have the honour to be, with very great respect, sir, Your most obdelt humble servt  
Henry Laurens, Presidt Cong.

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Gates' letters are in PCC, item 154, 1:288-92. On November 13 Congress resolved to send blank commissions to Gates so that he could "fill up the vacancies in the Massachusetts regiments." *JCC*, 9:897.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 9:884.

## Henry Laurens to Ebenezer Hancock

Sir

York 14th November. 1777

The duplicate of your favor of 30th past reached me three days ago & was immediately laid before Congress, the original has not appeared.



Your transmissions of Returns is Sent for Examination to the Treasury Board.

You will find under this Cover an Order on Nathaniel Appleton Esquire Commissioner of the Loan Office in Massachusetts dated 13 Inst. for two Hundred Thousand Dollars to be applied to purposes mentioned in your Letter which I remit agreeable to Resolve of Congress.<sup>1</sup>

I am with great respect, Sir, Your most obedt Servt.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Ebenezer Hancock Esquire, Dep Pay Master General Eastern Department, Boston."

<sup>1</sup> Deputy paymaster general Hancock explained in his October 30 letter that he needed this money "to pay off about Ten thousand Troops that have been doing duty at Rhode Island . . . to procure Provision, Fuel &c for the Prisoners of General Burgoyne's Army, and to defrey other necessary expences that may arise in this department." See PCC, item 78, 11:249; and JCC, 9:898. Laurens transmitted another copy of his letter of this date to Hancock with a brief note that he wrote to the deputy paymaster general on November 17. PCC, item 13, fol. 32.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir,

York Town 14th November 1777.

I have the pleasure of acknowledging in the Receipt of your Letter of 31st October your great attention to public good.<sup>1</sup>

Congress willing to avail themselves of the benefit which may arise from a purchase of the Woolen Cloths at Newberry Port & Salem have directed me to write to the General Assembly in Boston & also to Mr. Otis the Clothier Generals Agent on that head, I take the liberty of putting the Letters which I have written under your Cover.<sup>2</sup>

If the Clothier general is not fully in Cash he will be immediately supplied for payment of any purchases which may be made, I just now remark the Resolution is confined to Clothing but I am sure Congress meant to include Shoes, tis too late to procure an amendment in form without detaining the Messenger another day.

Your further interposition in this business if you can by any means assist Mr. Otis will be very acceptable to Congress.<sup>3</sup>

I have the honour to be, with great Esteem & respect, Sir, Your most Obedt Servt,

Henry Laurens, Presidt in Cong.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Heath's letter is in PCC, item 157, fol. 21.

<sup>2</sup> See JCC, 9:893. Laurens wrote letters to the Massachusetts Council on November 14 and to Samuel A. Otis on November 14 and 17, urging them to procure this clothing for the army. PCC, item 13, fols. 23, 31.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens underscored the seriousness of the army's clothing shortage on

November 17, when he dispatched a duplicate copy of this letter to Heath with the following message appended. "I beg leave to refer you to the above Copy of what I had the honour of writing to you the 14th & of confirming *now*, by Order of Congress, to avoid the evils which might attend in case of miscarriage or delay of the Original. The distress of the Army in this State through a want of Clothing, Blankets & Shoes is every day increasing to a most dangerous pitch & calls aloud for all the relief that can possibly be afforded & the most speedy. Congress flatter themselves with great hopes from your exertions in the present Instance." Heath Papers, MHi.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas McKean

Sir

York 14th November 1777

I had the honour of addressing you under the Inst.<sup>1</sup> My present duty is to transmit a Resolve of Congress leading to an enquiry into the State of Delaware<sup>2</sup> & requiring the Delegates from the State to attend Congress. The Resolve being Sufficiently explicit it remains only for me to refer to it & request you will give the needful answer at your convenience. I am with great regard, Sir, your most obedt. Servt.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "The Honorable Thos. McKean Esquire, Speaker of Assembly, Delaware."

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to the States, November 1, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The enclosed resolve of this date specifically asked Speaker McKean "to prevent the disaffected inhabitants of [Delaware] from furnishing the enemy's fleet or army with provisions or supplies of any kind." JCC, 9:905-6.

## Henry Laurens to William Palfrey

Sir

York 14th November 1777

Your favor of the 11th reached me this Morning & was immediately laid before Congress.

The Treasury board are exerting themselves in the provision of money for both Armies, their Chairman has assured me you Shall Speedily be Supplied with such part of your requisition as will keep you employed until the remainder Shall be transmitted. Also that 150000 Dollars are Sent to Mr. Bedlow at Fish Kill & that a further Sum Shall Soon follow. I have written on this head to the General to whom I beg leave to refer.<sup>1</sup>

I am with great regard, Sir, Your most Obedt. Servant

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "William Palfrey Esquire, Pay Master General, Head Quarters White Marsh."

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 9:901; and the next entry.

## Henry Laurens to Israel Putnam

Sir

York 14th November. 1777.

I have within a few days past been honoured by the receipt of Several Letters from you which were all laid before Congress & being chiefly on the topic of money were immediately committed to the Board of Treasury, where I cannot, so early in the Morning as I am writing, have access to quote the Several dates. Your goodness will excuse my deficiency in this particular.

Upon my pressing the Chairman of the Treasury to make you the most Speedy remittances he informed me that 150000 Dollars were already Sent to the Deputy pay Master Mr. Bedlow & that a further Sum Shall be transmitted with the utmost expedition. The business of the Treasury from the removal of Congress has been greatly obstructed & the uncommon conspiracy of demands had reduced the fund to a low ebb, but proper means for replenishing are now carrying into effect.

Congress will leave no measure unattempted for stopping the progress of extortion, your Letters on that head are in the hands of a Special Committee & I hope the Subject of prices of the necessaries of life will soon be profitably debated & considered in the House, the difficulty of restraining within proper bounds is great but I hope not insurmountable.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be with very great respect & Esteem.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Major General Putnam, Fish Kill."

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Putnam's latest letter to Congress—that of November 3—had been referred to the committee considering the proceedings of the August 1777 convention of eastern states on economic affairs, for which see Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke, August 17, 1777, note 2.

## Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Sir

York 14th November. 1777

Inclosed you will receive a Resolve of Congress Ordering that you transmit a Certificate from Mr. Cuyler Specifying the Sum received by him from the Military Chest in order that Such Sum may be passed to your Credit by charging the Commissary General of purchases.<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to be, with great regard, Sir, Your Excellency's most Ot. Servt.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "His Excellency Jonathan Trumbull Esquire, Governor of Connecticut, Lebanon."

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 9:894.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

14 Novr. [1777] Yk Town

Tho I must refer you as well as Mr. Hancock to what I have written to Mr. S. Adams relative to the Business in Congress,<sup>1</sup> and also omit at present general chit chat of Men, Women & Things, Yet one little Piece of History wch. is peculiarly adapted to yr. improving Fancy I must put down. Mr. Hancock's Waggoner who went with Mr. Hancock to Boston, after his Return to Germantown his Home fancied to visit his parents in Philadelphia where he was pointed out by one Corey a Breeches maker and put under guard but by the Intercession of one of the Allen's who had been schoolmate with him, and who mentioned that the mans circumstances obliged him to work for Mr. Hancock as well as any other who might incline to employ him. Mr. Laurens asked the Waggoner if he was in Philada. when the Defeat of Count Dunop was reported there first; he answered yes, and, that the Hessians were exceedingly cast down. He turned his Eye to a Table & asked the President whether the large book upon it was a Bible; on being answered yes, he turned to the 2d Part of the 44th Psalm and read the Poetry which he declared the Hessians sang on meeting their surviving Chief. The President bid him remember that it was a Bible in his Hand; and also asked him if he would take his Oath. The man replied that he would not swear he heard them sing, but he would swear that one or two Officers read those verses in the Guard Room as the verses which the Hessians had been solemnly singing.

They must be deeply touched indeed to make a religious ceremony and openly therein avow their disgrace.

It is said they are mighty Bible men each being Possessor of one.

My head snaps with writing and the two Fouquets are chattering French at my Elbow in the Board of War Room. Therefore I conclude yr. affectionate, obliged,

James Lovell

P.S. I should not have kept my regards for your Lady to be presented in a postscript, if I was not bent upon following them with Something adequate to a downright Execration of the Enemies of my Country and the Liberties of Mankind. May no one such even feel a fiftieth part of your delicate domestic Enjoyments. JL

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.



## Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke

Honored Sir, York Town Pensylva. Novr. 14th. 1777

Mr. Ellery informed me a long Time since that he expected to set out in a few Days, but as yet I hear nothing of Him. I hope Sir, if any Accident detains him, The General Assembly will appoint another Delegate immediately, as I must very soon be upon my Return, and I earnestly wish the State may not be unrepresented. You are sensible Sir, that I expressly declared I could not consent to be absent more than six Months at a Time, and proper Provision was intended to be made to keep up a Representation. I observed to you before that under this full Expectation, I neither prepared myself for staying the Winter here, nor my Family and private affairs for so long an absence. I shall however stay till I can bring forward the Confederation, an Object of great Moment which is now brought to a very near Conclusion. We are very much disappointed in the Expedition agt. Rhode Island. The Cause of its Failure we are not yet made acquainted with.<sup>1</sup> Reinforcements are advancing from our Northward Army to join General Washington, and it is said a considerable Fleet have sailed from New-York, with Reinforcements to join Genl. How. Nothing material has happened at Philadelphia & the Delaware since my last Intelligence to you, save that a floating Battery which the Enemy had constructed, sunk in a few Days after She was on Float—And that a 64 gun Ship got aground near the Jersey Shore, where Genl. Varnum got down two 12 Pounders upon the Shore & huled her many Times which caused her to give several Signals of Distress, but at the Tide rising two others came to her Releif & got her off.

I have not Time to add, but that I am Honored Sir, most respectfully your very humble Servt. Hy. Marchant

RC (R-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> See Henry Laurens to the Rhode Island Expedition Commissioners, December 15, 1777.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Timothy Matlack

Dr Sir, York Town, Novr 14th, 1777.

I thank you for your punctuality and care and acknowledge the receipt of the Books five in number, of which care shall be taken.<sup>1</sup> You mention nothing of any agreement with the express, or whether paid or not, he charges 2 days at six Dollars per day, it may be right, although very high, for these reasons I take the liberty to refer the matter to you and beg you will pay the Bearer, which shall be reimbursed on the first notice, for besides the above at this instant,

business is so pressing and important I cant attend to it, which is also my apology for breaking off so abruptly.

I am respectfully, Dr Sir, yr very obt friend & Servt,  
Dan'l Roberdeau.

P.S. I have two Books in the hands of Mr. James Reed, one of which Ovid I have not the same occasion of as when I wrote for it, and as these books were spared as a favour perhaps it will suit Mr. Reed to keep Ovid, otherwise I beg to rely on your punctuality for sending it forward to me per first good private hand with the Virgil, if my negligent friend Col. Bayard has not done it, prey forward me the regulation of prices.

MS not found; reprinted from *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 5:772.

<sup>1</sup> Probably the works of Grotius, Pufendorf, and Vattel that had been requested by Elbridge Gerry and Roberdeau from Thomas Wharton a few days previously, plus the two books Roberdeau mentioned in his postscript. See Elbridge Gerry to Thomas Wharton, November 8, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to Benjamin Huger

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>

York 15th November 1777.

If it had been in my power you could not have wished a person more ready to Serve you than I Should have been in the affair referred to in your favour of the 2d. September which was delivered to me as it happened two days too late for a particular interposition on behalf of the Appellee in the Case of the Schooner Rosanna & the Cause had been matured for judgement before I had been named to the Bench for hearing & deciding upon Appeals in prize Cases. Therefore I purposely refrained from Sitting when the final opinion was to be pronounced.<sup>2</sup>

I had indeed perused Copies of the proceedings & from them had formed a judgement of my own without knowing particularly who was Interested. Immediately upon receipt of your Letter I determined if needful to employ an Advocate, but upon application to Colo. Harnet with offers of my assistance he informed me the Bench had by their Sentence reversed the Decree given in Admiralty & ordered restitution of property or value to be made to the Appellants. Hence I ought in modesty to think my own opinion erroneous, but although I am far from being an obstinate fellow & pay great deference to Some of the Gentlemen of the Bench I cannot honestly Say I acquiesce<sup>3</sup>—the pursuit of that phantom is however at an end.

All the great News of Burgoyne John Esqr. &ca. will have been familiar before this can reach you. Our Eyes are now fixed upon Delaware. Forts Mifflin & Mercer together with Some of our Armed Vessels have performed such Acts of Defence against the attempts

of a British fleet & Army as will unite the Commanders in future history with the Name of Franklin when that valuable Man Shall be particularly celebrated for his construction of the Marine Cheveaux de frize. Force upon force continually repeating attacks upon those brave Men, if they fall, Honour will attend them & the Enemy will have made a dear & inglorious purchase of victory. The detail of this part of our War will astonish Europe—at least will be admired there. General Washington has afforded all the reinforcements he can Spare to their Support, the Forts are respectively in better posture for defense than they were a Month ago but the late arrival of Troops from New York Supposed to be upwards of three Thousand may enable the Enemy to overpower the Garrisons, if ever that happens it will be accompanied by Shocking Carnage. The loss on that Side has already been great. 1 Ship of 64 Guns & 1 Frigate burnt—one 64 Gun Ship exceedingly injured & Several others very much hurt & at a moderate computation drowned, Slain & Captured full one thousand Men. On our part the killed & wounded Scarcely exceed Sixty. The Rascals who gave up the Ship Delaware & a few Deserters from the Gallies to be added.

I expect the next Letters will announce the arrival of reenforcements from four to Six Thousand Men to General Washington. Our contest will then Seem to be drawn to one point where I hope the Campaign will happily terminate in our favour. I dare not trust myself to believe with some people this Years Success will end the War.

Capt. Hyrne will relate to you the Starving condition of the Enemy & false friends in Philadelphia, how we frequently make prisoners & daily receive deserters, the discontents of the Hessian Officers & Troops & many other articles not omitting a Scandalous retreat from Rhode Island. I will not further trouble you but to repeat that I am with great regard &ca.

P.S. You may be told Our General is under a pernicious influence of two General Officers.<sup>4</sup> Suspend Judgement. I have seen the General's Sentiments very fully & freely written to a friend on that Subject. I will not beleive a word of the Whispers.

LB (ScHi). FC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> Benjamin Huger (1746–79), a South Carolina planter and public officeholder, was at this time major of the Fifth South Carolina Regiment. Walter B. Edgar and N. Louise Bailey, *Biographical Directory of the South Carolina House of Representatives* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974–), 2:337–38.

<sup>2</sup> Legal records pertaining to the case of *Fowkes v. The Roseanna, Hussey, Claimant*, are in Records of the Supreme Court of the United States, Record Group 267, case no. 20, DNA. This case involved an appeal of a decree of the North Carolina Admiralty Court, which the committee on appeals first affirmed on June 9 and then reversed on October 25, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> At this point in the FC Laurens wrote and then deleted the following sentences: "Colonel Harnet was my first informant. When I applied to him with offers of any service he said he was of my opinion, he thought the Case was in

favour of the Captors. One of the Judges on the Bench, meaning no disparagement to the other Gentlemen, is esteemed a good Lawyer & universally esteemed an honest Man. This circumstance if I were as nearly concerned as you are would make the disappointment sit lighter. However expectation from that Bagatelle is at an end."

<sup>4</sup> Nathanael Greene and Henry Knox were probably the two generals Laurens had in mind. Freeman, *Washington*, 4:587.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

15th. [November 1777]

I believe I was going on to say a great deal when this paper was laid down the 12th. Now I am confined to almost a bare acknowledgement of your favors of the 6th, 7th, 9th & 10th.<sup>1</sup> I thank you for their several contents. Give me all the intelligence you can *with propriety*. It is of real use to me.

If Capt Nichols lies in your way tell him I shall be glad, if he stands in need, to assist him with Money or any other convenience & also to see him if he travels *by order* this way, but I think he will make a good Exchange for Manly now at New York.<sup>2</sup> If he wants Money let me hear from him. I am unfeignedly sorry my old Captain Pond had not put it in my power to offer him my services also, & to remind him of my predictions, when we used to talk of War between the Master of Le Despenser & the people who formerly paid him Postage for Letters.

James bought several articles for you in his way home of which he will send an Accot. with the articles by the bearer of this. Ribbon he says is not to be purchased. Gloves & Breeches Ball he is to have some day next week. Boots he almost despairs of. I will give every assistance in my power for obtaining these & any thing else you may want. Biray shall have warm Cloths of some sort provided for him very soon.

I thank you for your kind Congratulations. I feel warm'd by the good wishes of my friend, but very Frigid as to the honour immediately lighting on my self.

I never thought as most Men do on these occasions, if a Man works very hard, increases his daily expence of Estate & receives no emolument, he feels no anxious coveting of places & upon my inmost honour I am weary & long to be at rest. The World have determined I shall find none till I arrive at the place where the Wicked cease from troubling.

Your good General, for whom I entertain the greatest veneration, in his Compliments embarrassed me exceedingly by drawing in the conduct of my Predecessor.<sup>3</sup> I hate comparisons. I am sure he had none but the best meaning yet I felt an awkwardness & difficulty for a proper answer, such as I have given flowed from the mind very



ARTICLES  
OF  
Confederation  
AND  
Perpetual Union  
BETWEEN THE *U. S.*  
S T A T E S

OF

NEW-HAMPSHIRE, MASSACHUSETTS-BAY, RHODE-  
ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS, CON-  
NECTICUT, NEW-YORK, NEW-JERSEY, PENNSYL-  
VANIA, DELAWARE, MARYLAND, VIRGINIA,  
NORTH-CAROLINA, SOUTH-CAROLINA AND GEOR-  
GIA.



City of Lancaster

L A N C A S T E R:  
PRINTED BY FRANCIS BAILEY.  
M,DCC,LXXVII.

suddenly & I as suddenly committed it to paper.<sup>4</sup> I hope it will give no offence, but I can't flatter. My Dear Son write as often & as fully as time will permit & make your Father in such intervals happy.

Adieu,

Henry Laurens

RC (MHi). A continuation of Laurens to Laurens, November 12, 1777.

<sup>1</sup> All but the first of these letters are in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 69-74.

<sup>2</sup> See Laurens to William Nichols, November 21, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> In a November 10 letter to Laurens, Washington wrote that he expected the new president of Congress to demonstrate "the same politeness and attention to the Interest of the States that marked the conduct of your Worthy predecessor." Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:33.

<sup>4</sup> See Laurens to Washington, November 13, 1777.

## Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir,

York the 15th of Novr. 1777

The Bearer of this, Capt. Romane is a Gentleman of Monsr. Coudrays corps who arrived here lately from Charles Town and is now returning by the way of Boston to France with his companions. This young Gentleman is Nephew to General Grebouval Commander of the French Artillery, and he is a modest well behaved youth. At his request I willingly introduce him to you, and I am sure that from personal, as well as political considerations, you will render Capt. Romane's stay in Boston as agreeable to him as possible. This gentleman had once determined to pass the winter at Annapolis in order to learn the English language, but his Countrymen, it seems, have persuaded him to return with them to France. Their design, we understand, for so doing, is to fortify themselves with interest and numbers, in order to give greater weight to their representations of ill usage in America. I am much dissatisfied my dear friend with this whole business, because I apprehend pernicious consequences will result to our Country and its cause from the complaints of these gentlemen, who are of consideration in France and well supported there. I have endeavored to avert this mischief by every means in my power, and I think it will conduce to this end if the Gentlemen of Boston were to treat these Officers with attention and make their stay in Boston agreeable as possible. Our affairs about Philadelphia are in Statu quo, but how long they will continue so I do not know, because we learn that a fleet from New York has arrived in the Delaware with reenforcements to Howe. We have at length finished the Confederation and shall send it to the different States in a few days with strong exhortation to give it quick consideration and speedy return.<sup>1</sup> Taxation, Finance, and recruiting the Army will also be strongly recommended. Your utmost aid will no doubt be cordially applied to the expediting these important points.

My health groes worse and will, I fear, compel me soon to return home.

My compliments to Mr. J. Adams. Affectionately yours,  
Richard Henry Lee

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Congress approved the Articles of Confederation this day and ordered 300 copies to be printed. Two days later it also approved a circular letter of transmittal to the states, but printed texts of the Articles were not available for submission to the states until almost the end of November. See *JCC*, 9:907-28, 932-35; and William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., November 28, 1777.

## Daniel Roberdeau to George Bryan

Sir,

York Town Novr. 15th. 1777

I acknowledge the honor of a Letter from Council with the enclosures which shall be immediately laid before Congress,<sup>1</sup> and Council may be assured of my most vigorous exertions on the important Business recommended and without delay advise them; in the meantime with most respectful Salutation I remain their and your Most obt. huml. Servt.

Daniel Roberdeau

P.S. Confederation will be sent off for Lancaster to be printed.

RC (MeHi).

<sup>1</sup> Roberdeau laid Bryan's November 14 letter and "sundry papers relative to Indian depredations on the western frontiers" before Congress this same afternoon. *JCC*, 9:928. The documents are in *PCC*, item 69, 1:433-40; and *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser., 5:741-42, 6:3-4.

## John Penn to Timothy Matlack

Dear Sir,

York Town, Novr 16th, 1777.

I have not a word on the subject of news worth communicating, unless, that we have gone through the confideration, it will be sent to Lancaster to be printed as soon as possible.

Col. John Banister a friend of mine near Petersburg in Virga wrote to me to buy him three hundred pounds weight of clover seed (the red sort) & send to him. As I do not know who to apply to, I have taken the liberty to ask the favr of you to speak to a proper person to engage that quantity & give it a pass as soon as a waggon offers, I will pay the money when wanted, let me hear from you. I am your ob't Servt,

J. Penn.

MS not found; reprinted from *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:10. Addressed: "Col. Timothy Matlack, Lancaster."

## Henry Laurens to James Mease

Sir

York 17th November 1777.

Inclosed you will receive three Certified Copies of Resolves of Congress of the 15th Inst. directing you to appoint a Deputy in each State where you have not already appointed,<sup>1</sup> & relative to Clothing in the port of Bedford to which I beg leave to refer you. Two of these are to be Sent Severally to Mr. Bradford & to your Deputy at Rhode Island or to the Governor & Council if an appointment through their interposition Shall be necessary.

Congress having received advice from Majr. General Heath of a large quantity of Cloth Sufficient for covering 10000 Soldiers & also a considerable Number of Shoes in the Towns of Newberry Port & Salem the preference of which he had Secured to the Public have given orders to the Agent for the Clothier General at Boston to purchase both articles. I have writ to the Assembly of Massachusetts every needful assistance on the occasion to Mr. Otis. General Heath will likewise if necessary interpose his good offices. You know whether you have Sufficient funds in Boston for paying the Amount of so large a purchase & will guard betimes. The Resolve which I now inclose does not extend to the intended purchases at Newberry & Salem although I am sure it was so intended & you will give directions accordingly. If Mr. Otis Succeeds I think we have a fair prospect of Clothing the Army in a Short time. Nothing but vigilance will be necessary in which your department will not be deficient.

If you will depute Mr. John Raven Merchant in Charles Town to be your Aid for So. Carolina you will find him accurate, diligent, perfectly well acquainted with business, Sensible & of tried integrity, no Man there can Serve the public better nor make your business in that part more easy & reputable to you.

I am

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Mease was clothier general of the Continental Army.

## Henry Laurens to Certain States

Sir.

York Town 17th Novem 1777.

The extreme want of Blankets & Clothing in General Washington's Line, induced Congress on the 15th Inst. to confirm a Resolution for calling on those States to whom by a former Resolve it had been recommended to collect such essential articles & to request that without delay all that shall have been collected may be forwarded to Camp.<sup>1</sup>



A Copy of the first mentioned Resolve together with a subjoin'd extract from the General's Letter dated the 11th Inst. will accompany this.<sup>2</sup>

Your Excellency will be pleased to take the necessary measures on your part in order to insure the great end in view—enabling our distressed Soldiers to keep the Field, indeed to save many of them from perishing.

I have the honour to be, with very great respect, sir, Your Excellency's Most obedt. humble servt.

Henry Laurens, President Cong

RC (Vi). Addressed: "His Excellency Governor Henry." Laurens also wrote the same letter this day to the speaker of the Massachusetts Assembly (PCC, item 13), the governors of Connecticut (Ct), and New Jersey (MHj), and the president of Pennsylvania (IHj). According to the journals, he was supposed to write a similar letter to Maryland, but no text has been found. *JCC*, 9:906.

<sup>1</sup> In Laurens' letter to Massachusetts, this paragraph is preceded by another paragraph that is not in any of the other letters listed above. "I confirm & beg leave to refer to the above Copy of what I had the honour of writing to you under the 14th Curr., duplicate of the Resolution & Letter there mentioned will be found with this." See also Laurens to William Heath, November 14, 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> The enclosed November 15 resolve confirmed an October 16 resolve "relative to cloathing wanted for the army." *JCC*, 9:809, 906–7. Washington's November 11 letter on this subject is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:36–39.

## Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Purviance, Jr.

Dear Sir,

York the 17th Novr. 1777

I had heard of my loss before yours of the 15th came to hand, and I regret it the more as Cards, and good ones especially, are not easy to be got. Those that you speak of, I had interested myself with the Workman at Wilmington to have of the best kind. I was in hopes that by a strict enquiry after them, they might yet be found, and spoke to your brother about having such enquiry made. At all events, Cards are so much wanted in my family, that I must beg the favor of you to procure for me a good pair of Cotton and one of Wool against I pass thro Baltimore in my way to Virginia, which will be in about 8 or 10 days; as my ill state of health will not admit of my staying long here. You will oblige me Sir by sending my Cask, that was left with you for me in June last, to Potomack river by the first good opportunity, and direct it to be landed at the house of George Turberville esquire, about 20 miles from the mouth of Potomac on the South side, and about 3 miles above the mouth of Yeocomico. I would prefer Mr. Crump to any other person for carrying the Cask, but I would not loose a good opportunity that might offer sooner. The affair of the Spanish fleet that you mention, we had

heard of some time ago, and at the same time, that since the death of the King of Portugal, all differences were made up between the two Courts, and orders sent to South America to restore all things there to quiet. We hear nothing from Philadelphia, except that the Inhabitants are in great distress for provisions. Both Armies are still, and both have lately received reenforcements. A considerable part of Gen. Gate's army will shortly join Gen. Washington.

I am dear Sir your most obedient and very humble servant,

Richard Henry Lee

RC (ViU).

## Marine Committee to Daniel Tillinghast

Sir

November 17th 1777

Since our last <sup>1</sup> inclosing an Order in your favour on the Honble Stephen Hopkins Esqr. we have discovered that the charge of 20,000 dollars against that Gentleman as moneys received by him the 10th of Feby. 1776 as being received towards the building the Frigates at Providence is a mistake, of which we have particularly advised Mr. Hopkins.<sup>2</sup> That order drawn on him in your favour you will return to us to be destroyed. We have now enclosed you a Warrant upon the Loan office of Rhode Island for 20,950 Dollars to enable you to discharge the Balance of 5023  $\frac{1}{9}$  Dollars due to the Gentlemen employed by Mr. Hopkins to build the Continental Frigates at Providence (their Commissions &c hereafter to be considered) and to supply you the sum for which our Order in your favour on Mr. Hopkins was drawn being 15.926  $\frac{8}{9}$ ths Dollars and for which you are to be accountable. You will please to take Duplicate receipts of those Gentlemen to whom you pay the above mentioned balance of 5023  $\frac{1}{9}$  Dollars and transmit one of them to us. How the above mistake arose you will see by our Letter to Mr. Hopkins. We are sorry it should lead us to trouble him and to delay you and the Gentlemen employed in building said Frigates. We have endeavoured to rectify it as soon as possible. There still however appears to be a balance in Mr. Hopkins hands on Account of those Ships of 950 Dollars which he also Suggests is a mistake. If he should not be able to point it out to us we have desired him to pay that sum to you, we desire you to receive it to be accountable therefor. We have not lessened the Warrant on the Loan office on that Account. A further sum of 119  $\frac{36}{90}$ ths Dollars appears also to be due from Mr. Hopkins to the Naval Committee of which he was Chairman, and which sum we have also requested him to pay you, and we desire you to receive it and place it to our Account.

We are Sir Your most hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> See Marine Committee to Tillinghast, November 13, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The Marine Committee explained in their letter to Stephen Hopkins this day that "this error arose from the short manner in which the charges are made in the Treasury and not reciting the purport of the Orders. By inspecting that Order it appears to have been drawn on the Continental Treasurer and by you received for the use of the Naval Committee who fitted out the Ships of war at Philadelphia. The inclosed Copy of the order of this Committee which is entered upon our Journals will shew you how the mistake is rectified. We are very sorry such a mistake was made." PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book, fols. 112-13; and Paullin, *Marine Committee Letters*, 1:174-76.

## Jonathan Elmer to William Maxwell

Dear Sir

York Town 18th Novr. 1777

Your Letter to Dr. Witherspoon came to my hands after he left Congress. As I was informed of the Contents of it I opened it & laid Col. Dayton's case before Congress. Though they seem fully sensible of the merits & services of Col. Dayton yet the many applications of a similar nature from Officers of the Army made them hesitate about allowing him a Horse. The affair however was referred to the Board of War. Should I not leave Congress soon I will use my influence to obtain the Consent of that Board to the measure.<sup>1</sup>

Please to give my respects to Col. Dayton, inform him what I have done in his favour & that I should have applied to Congress in his behalf sooner than I did but saw no prospect of succeeding. I will serve him as far as shall be in my power.

I am your Hble Servt.

Jona. Elmer

RC (NN). Addressed: "Brigadr. Genl. Maxwell, Lord Sterlings Division, New Jersey Troops."

<sup>1</sup> There is no mention of this issue in the journals beyond the fact that the "motion . . . for supplying Colonel Dayton with a horse" was referred to the Board of War on November 7. *JCC*, 9:878.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir

York 18th November 1777

I have of late been obliged, I may truly Say obliged, to give so many recommendatory Letters to poor disappointed French Officers who will call upon you, I fear being very troublesome.<sup>1</sup>

I draw however some consolation from knowing there is only one more in the way, for whom I shall apply to obtain your countenance & Civilities & that upon the whole I am in hopes you will suffer neither inconvenience nor real loss by an acquaintance with so many

inhabitants of a Kingdom with which America will probably be connected in Commerce.

Le Chevalr. Dorset will be the bearer of this, he has Strove hard & Stooped low, in order to get a Commission in our Service, but it was judged impossible. This does not arise from any aversion to the French on our part, the contrary is clear, from these considerations, that we have a numerous train of French Officers in the Army, & that I Signed last Night & the day before no less than five new Commissions for such Vizt. to Rank one Brigadier, two Colonels, one Lt. Colonel & one Captain. The Chevalier is well recommended by Doctor Franklin, he will strive to obtain employment in his profession at Charles Town & I have assured him if 'tis in your power to assist him you will, and not keep him in suspence, which is the only ground he had for complaint against Congress, & even that, admitting there had been cause, is removed by a handsome donation made to him yesterday.<sup>2</sup>

Congress have made free with the funds in their power, from motives of humanity & policy, by giving such Sums to those disappointed Speculatists who had been induced to cross the Atlantic, from hearing there was "*a fine War*" on this Side, as they would refuse to any equal number of our home borne friends, who had even borne the burthen of our Struggle.

I shall have occasion within three days to dispatch an express Messenger to Charles Town who will probably be with you before the Chevalier. Therefore I shall only add my respectful Compliments to all my friends in & out of your House & that I continue with sincere affection & regard &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> None of these "recommendatory Letters" has been found.

<sup>2</sup> On November 17 Congress resolved that "200 dollars be presented to Monsr. Dorset as a gratification for his services and expences in America, and that a bill of exchange be drawn in his favour on the commissioners of Congress at the court of France, for 900 livres to pay his passage to France and defray his expences to Paris." *JCC*, 9:932. See also Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette, October 12, 1777, note 1.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

18th Novr. [1777]

It appears by Returns this day rec'd. from Genl. Gates that Burgoine must have destroyed his Standards and almost every other military Trophy during the Capitulation.<sup>1</sup> Not one Musket fit for use was delivered, not one Scabbard to a Bayonett or Cutlass. We are told that instead of piling the Arms the Enemy chose to ground them, that the Waggons might more certainly crush them. Gates does



not notice this as a Breach of Convention, tho his Returns show the Facts; yet he says that if Howe obstinately refuses an honourable Cartel it is proper to delay fulfilling the Convention. I wish you had not left York till now, as I join in the Opinion of many here. Today, a Committee ought to know the Facts first exactly from Gates, and be empowered to proceed from Albany to Boston, if found necessary. You know I was critical about not violating the Treaty: But the Returns have proved very unfair Dealing on the part of Burgoyne.

You would scold me yourself if you knew how sick I am and what Hour of the Night it is. You must see Mr. S. Adams for I scrawl one Thing to him and another to you out of pure Economy. Gates tells me on the 10th "General Lincoln recovers apace."

With affection & Esteem, yr. humb Servt. James Lovell

[P.S.] A certain Lady has cried bitterly Today about Philada. and says "she had rather *dye* in its Goal than *Live* in any other place. Curse those who began the Trouble, curse W——." This savours a little of Toryism. I really believe the *two dear Men* were within the Wind of the Curse. But you will call this, Jealousy, Envy, and a Desire to rob you of your portion of HONEY; therefore I desist, and crawl to Bed in a starlight Morning.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Horatio Gates' November 10 letter with a "return of ordnance &c" was read in Congress this day and referred to a committee on November 19. See JCC, 9:936, 939.

## James Duane to the New York Council of Safety

Honourable Gentlemen, York Town, Novr. 3d [ca. 19], 1777.<sup>1</sup>

Your despatches of the 22d of October, were safely delivered by the express. I thought it advisable, Mr. Duer being absent a few days for the benefit of health, to detain him till Congress should have time to deliberate and determine upon the delicate and important propositions you recommend to their attention. They are now submitted to a committee and you shall be acquainted with the result.<sup>2</sup>

Every body here is sensibly touched at the melancholy catastrophe which followed the loss of the passes in the Highlands. When so great a number of troops were withdrawn, I predicted the fatal event. In calling away 1500 men, Congress in my opinion, went too far; I strenuously remonstrated against it, but in vain.<sup>3</sup> The hopes of being able to subdue General Howe by such a reinforcement preponderated. No member could be persuaded that it was in Sir Henry Clinton's power to give the State of New-York the least disturbance. The report of his having received reinforcements was not credited. The

unhappy measure was therefore adopted; to add to the misfortune, General Washington had before ordered forward a thousand men. Indeed both he and Congress were led into an opinion that General Putnam's army consisted of between seven and eight thousand men. Had it been really the case, probably no mischief would have ensued. I was among the unbelievers.

While I reprobate the savage conduct of our unfeeling invaders, so disgraceful to human nature, most sincerely do I condole with my suffering fellow citizens, whose public virtues and generous patriotism entitle them to the respect even of enemies.

The loss of the forts and the ruined defences, will, I flatter myself, be speedily and effectually repaired; Congress being determined to spare no expense which shall be thought necessary. They view the importance of Hudson's river, and the merit of our State in as high a point of light as yourselves could wish; and I am confident that there is nothing your Delegates could ask on this occasion which would be withheld. General Gates is already invested with ample powers for every purpose necessary to our security.

Permit me to change this gloomy subject, and to congratulate you on the reduction of General Burgoine and his army; an event which ought to raise our gratitude to the Supreme Being, the more especially, as it may be considered as a strong foundation of future repose in the northern frontier of our State. Nothing material has happened between the grand armies since the battle of German Town. The Howes' apply their whole attention to reduce the forts and remove the obstructions in the Delaware. Fort Mifflin, which we never esteemed capable of defence, has withstood a violent siege by land and water for seven weeks. It is now in ruins; the palisadoes levelled; most of the artillery useless; the barracks and stores destroyed; and nothing but the spirits of the garrison and the battery remaining. A report prevails that it is evacuated; we have no authentic intelligence, but it is more than probable.<sup>4</sup> General Washington, on his part, is endeavoring to cut off the communication between the city and country in order to starve the enemy. They however found means to introduce a supply in three vessels, which in a strong wind and tide passed between the fort and Province island, in spite of a heavy cannonade; the shot from which frequently pierced through their sides. The rapidity of their passage prevented their destruction.

It is generally believed if the enemy do not get up their shipping in ten days they will quit Philadelphia to preserve the fleet; but that if they succeed, it will be made their winter quarters. The weather here is very cold and both armies suffer extremely, ours more especially for want of clothing. It is an undoubted fact that Gen. Howe is much discouraged both at the unexpected and obstinate resistance of the forts, and at the fate of Burgoine, whose victory over Genl. Gates he had authoritatively announced.

Be pleased to accept my best thanks for the leave of absence with which I am indulged. The confederation is completed and I expect will be forwarded by this conveyance, as it is in the press at Lancaster.<sup>5</sup> Nothing of any very interesting nature will be left unfinished when I set out; the day is uncertain, as neither Mr. Morris nor Lewis have yet arrived.

I have the honour to be, With the utmost regard, honl. gentlemen,  
Your most obedient and very huml. servant,<sup>6</sup>

Jas. Duane.

Reprinted from *Journals of the N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 2:439.

<sup>1</sup> Although this letter is dated November 3 in *Journals of the N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, Duane's discussion of reports about the November 15 evacuation of Fort Mifflin closely resembles the discussion of the same subject in his November 19 letter to Philip Schuyler and suggests that both were written about the same time. See also below, notes 4 and 5. It is also pertinent to note that Duane continued the letter on November 22 and that a transcript of it made in the nineteenth century for Jared Sparks is simply dated "Novemb 1777." Sparks Manuscripts, MH-H.

<sup>2</sup> The council of safety's October 22 letter to the New York delegates is not mentioned in the journals of Congress, and there is no mention in the council of safety's records of an October 22 letter to Congress. A text of the letter to the delegates is in *Journals of the N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 1:1072. William Duer was apparently absent from Congress between November 9 and 19, judging from the omission of his name in the journals for those days.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to Congress' September 12 order to Gen. Israel Putnam to send a reinforcement of 1,500 men to Washington after the battle of Brandywine. *JCC*, 8:736.

<sup>4</sup> There was a report about the evacuation of Fort Mifflin in the November 17 issue of the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*.

<sup>5</sup> Congress both approved the final version of the Articles of Confederation and ordered 300 copies of them to be printed on November 15. *JCC*, 9:907-28. According to Daniel Roberdeau, the Articles still had not been sent to Lancaster for printing as of November 16. See Roberdeau to George Bryan, November 16, 1777.

<sup>6</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Duane to the New York Council of Safety, November 22, 1777.

## James Duane to Philip Schuyler

Dear General

York Town 19t Novr 1777

We are at so great a distance from Head Quarters that we seldom hear the news of the Camp but upon important Events. A Report prevails that after a siege both by Land and Water of seven Weeks Fort Mifflin is evacuated. I take it for granted that it cannot long resist the vast Efforts against it, even if this Account should prove premature. The Garrison have already immortalized themselves by uncommon Valour and Perseverance. It is some days since that the Palisadoes have been demolished, the Fort in Ruins, & the Barracks



and every Accommodation for the Troops destroyed; and that only two Cannon remaind servicable. The Battery alone was in a Condition to annoy the Enemy. The brave Garrison still retaind their Spirits.<sup>1</sup> In other Respects the Condition of the two Armies is the same as mentiond in my last: except that General Howe has found means in a high wind & strong Tide to get a Supply of Provisions to his Army in three Vessels which passed the Fort thro' a heavy Canonade in the Channel between that & Province Island.

I thought it advisable to obtain the enclosd Resolution to enable you If you shoud think fit to repair your misfortunes at Saraghtoga, and to prevent a Long & disagreeable Attendance at Head Quarters where you cou'd not live but in manner the most uncomfortable and expensive.<sup>2</sup> With usual Compliments, I remain, Dear Sir, most respectfully, Your most obedt & hume servt, Jas. Duane

P.S. I have at length after most Anxious & disagreeable service of 8 months obtaind my Leave of absence from the State & shall set out soon to visit my Family. What became of my Barn, Barracks or Crops? I have not heard; & I feel with pleasure the spirit of a Farmer.<sup>3</sup>

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed discussion of the British reduction of Fort Mifflin on November 10–15, see Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, pp. 225–67.

<sup>2</sup> The enclosed November 14 resolve stated that “General Schuyler be at liberty to attend to his private affairs” until the conclusion of the inquiry into the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. See *JCC*, 9:901; and John Hancock to Arthur St. Clair and Philip Schuyler, August 5, 1777, note.

<sup>3</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Duane to Schuyler, November 22, 1777.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Pennsylvania Novr. 19. 1777

I yesterday received your favour of the 18th Ultimo. You accuse me of not writing to you, I can only Say that I wrote while Congress remained in Philadelphia to my friends (*almost*) by every Post exclusive of Other Oppertunities by private hands. I have answered your several Queres by informing you that no Distiller is either to be hired, or purchased on such terms as you, or the Concerned would think reasonable but really extravagant. I have told you in five or Six of mine that Jackey was well and at School at Burlington &c. If you choose me to send for him here, I will endeavour to accomplish it, as there is a good School here where he might remain until my return, & I would then bring him with me if it should be your desire. Genl. Washingtons Army still remains near Philadelphia, & a Large reinforcement is hourly expected from Genl. Gates. A report



Prevails that the Enemy have at last taken possession of Fort Mifflin (Mud Island) this is not yet Confirmed but is thought probable. Whether Genl. Howe will be able to hold his ground in Philadelphia this Winter is still matter of doubt. Our Little fleet & forts on the Delaware have behaved nobly.

Mr. Gillon the bearer of this I beg leave to Introduce to your *particular* Notice—& that you will *introduce* him to my Other friends in Wilmington. See that his horses are taken Care of &c. He is a very deserving man. Send the Inclosed to Mrs. Harnett. I refer you to Mr. Gillon for every Other Intelligence you may wish to hear. He is this moment setting off. I am Dr Sir, Your sincer friend &c,

Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.] We have neither Post, or Press here therefore can send you no Printed Account, I am obliged to Catch at an Oppertunity to with [*i.e.* write] to my friends. Remember me to Mr. Quince &c &c.

RC (NcU).

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir

York 19th November 1777

Since I had the honour of writing to you the 13th to 15th Inst. I have received no other Commands from Congress your Excellency except the two Inclosed Resolves.

The 15th Inst. relative to Clothing & Blankets for the Army.

The 17 Inst. for appointments to Rank in the Army the Chevalier Duportail, Messrs. Du Lemoy, dela Radierre & Govion. Commissions in obedience to the Resolve are granted & the Several dates Noted on the Resolve.

A person from Philadelphia well known by the Name of John Brown was Reported to Congress yesterday by Mr. Morris as having come to him with a Message from General Sir Wm. Howe through the medium of Mr. Willing to Congress, importing generally that Sir William & Lord Howe were desirous of treating for terms of Peace with Congress that every thing that ever had been expected by America (Independency as he understood excepted) would be granted & Congress Money ratified.

This Man pretends to have come through General Potters Camp & to have dined with the General. He had been Some eight or ten days from Philadelphia at Manheim, Lancaster & other places. At Lancaster the Executive Council of this State had ordered him into Custody. He was released from confinement upon Mr. Morris's application and promise to bring him before Congress. The House Refused to see him & Resolved to remand him under Guard to the power of the State Council.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be, Sir, your Excellencys most Obt. huml Servt.

P.S. Congress in this Morning Session Resolved to make a Strict enquiry into the treatment of American Soldiers & other Inhabitants of America now or late prisoners in Philadelphia, a copy of the Resolution will be added to those above mentioned. I have been instructed by Congress to add a request to your Excellency to demand access by a proper Officer to Such prisoners as remain alive in order an effectual enquiry may be made & a Satisfactory answer as to facts returned.<sup>2</sup> Congress are of opinion that the demand may be justly founded on the precedent of Agents from the Enemy appointed on their part & permitted by Congress to visit Hessian prisoners on this Side.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> For further information about John Brown's abortive attempt to convey peace terms from Gen. William Howe to Congress, see *JCC*, 9:937-38; *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:25, 36-38; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:98-99; and Robert Morris to Thomas Wharton, November 30, 1777. Brown, a former servant of Robert Morris, claimed, in a statement made to the Pennsylvania Council of Safety on November 21, that Morris and William Duer had done their best to facilitate his efforts to bring General Howe's message to Congress. On the same day the council of safety had Brown imprisoned "for aiding & assisting the Enemies of the Commonwealth, and forming Combinations with them for betraying the United States into their hands." *Pa. Council Minutes*, 11:345-46.

<sup>2</sup> Washington reported in his November 23 letter to Congress that he had already proposed to General Howe that a proper person be permitted to investigate conditions in the Philadelphia prisons and he enclosed his correspondence with Howe on the subject. The Board of War's consideration of this correspondence resulted in several proposed resolutions which were considered on December 6 and 8 and postponed. But after conferring with Commissary of Prisoners Elias Boudinot, who was not permitted to visit American prisoners in Philadelphia, the board on January 21, 1778, submitted an extensive report on British mismanagement in caring for American prisoners in Philadelphia and New York. Congress responded by adopting a series of resolutions directed toward improving the treatment of American prisoners. See *JCC*, 9:1006-9, 10:74-82; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:99. For a comprehensive analysis of British treatment of American prisoners of war, see Larry G. Bowman, *Captive Americans: Prisoners during the American Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1976).

## John Penn to William Woodford

Dear Sir

York Novr. 19th. 1777

Inclosed I send you a letter from Colo. Pendleton. I have waited a few days in hopes to be able to mention something to you about your Rank. Mr. Jones has been unwell for some days, he has determined as soon as he can, either to make or second a motion that Justice should be done.

The Congress have settled the precedent in recalling all the Commissions from the Continental officers of Pennsylv. in order to grant new ones, that the proper rank of each officer may be preserved, several extraordinary promotions having taken place to the prejudice of some officers.<sup>1</sup>

I am under no doubt but we shall do what is right with regard to you and Genl. Scott tho' I can't help being vexed that it has been delayed so long. I have had some *(warm)* words with —— (You can guess).<sup>2</sup> He will be agt. you (I suspect) tho' not your State, we have rubbed very hard and in publick—more than once. I suspect the affair will be done this week, as soon as it is I will write you. You know my opinion of your ability and Integrity, also of General Scot, I shall therefore use every Thing in my power to have Justice done & as soon as possible not from Friendship but duty.<sup>3</sup>

Pray converse with Major John Taylor on the Subject of his dispute with Genl. Sullivan. Your Character as a Soldier and a Gentleman will be sufficient to Justifie him, in any part he may act, upon that occasion.<sup>4</sup> Pray remembr. me to Genl. Scot & am with great regard, Dear Sir, Your obt. Servt.  
J. Penn

RC (RPJCB). Addressed: "General Woodford, Near Head Quarters, Pennsylv."

<sup>1</sup> Congress took this action on November 12. *JCC*, 9:896.

<sup>2</sup> Penn is probably referring to Francis Lightfoot Lee, who was unsympathetic to Woodford's claim to precedence over another Virginia officer, Gen. George Weedon. See Lee to Weedon, March 31, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> Not until March 19, 1778, did Congress resolve the dispute about rank among Virginia Generals Woodford, Weedon, Charles Scott, and Peter Muhlenberg. *JCC*, 10:269. Mrs. Catesby Willis Stewart, *The Life of General William Woodford of the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (Richmond: Whittle & Shepperson, 1973), chaps. 26–31, prints what appears to be virtually every surviving primary source relating to this controversy. See also Committee at Camp Statement, March 2, 1778.

<sup>4</sup> Maj. John Taylor of Maryland, a subordinate of Gen. John Sullivan, had written a letter on August 24 to Col. Moses Hazen criticizing Sullivan's handling of a recent raid on Staten Island. For Taylor's critical letter, which he had asked Hazen to show to Penn, and other documents bearing on this episode, see Sullivan, *Papers* (Hammond), 1:460, 482–83, 485–90, 528–30, 537.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Sir

York Town Novr. 19th 1777

I am honoured with your several favours of the 15th, 16th & 17th Instant<sup>1</sup> to which I will reply at length if time and the extream coldness of the weather will permit, but I no sooner express my desire than I find myself limited to a few minutes. The regulation of the prices of necessaries for the army and the Quota's for each State until better ascertained I expect will be both reported this day by Committee's.<sup>2</sup> I acknowledge Shelly's affidavit come to hand which I



doubt not will satisfy every Inquirer. As soon as Confederation is returned from Lancaster, compared and signed it will be instantly forwarded to the respective States; with a Letter already prepared, warmly urging the passage of it, and that Delagates be returned to Congress to confirm a Confederation by the 10th March, therefore I hope our State will have a Legislative Body together to consider this important work, if not assembled in any State it is the earnest request of the above hinted address that the Executive should immediately call them together. The alarming account of the Depredations on our western Frontier was without delay laid before Congress,<sup>3</sup> and a report brought in on too large a Scale for the occasion as your Letter as well as the conjecture of some Members made highly probable. Genl. Hand as you know, was sent westward authorised by this State to call the Militia together for the very purpose now solicited by the back Inhabitants, but they it seems were not in a humour to turn out, for this, that and a thousand other Reasons which probably could not be obviated without violating the Militia Law and Discarding many Officers the Genl. perhaps not excepted. An inquiry is on foot respecting the principles and conduct of Coll. Morgan, but as far as it has gone we find the Genl. involved in the same predicament, and that it is no other than the unreasonable Clamour of some discontented Spirits, however I am resolved to go to the bottom if it has any. But I am very apprehensive the Deity self interest reigns predominant in the Western as well as every other quarter of our Land, and that a desire to enrich themselves has too much influence and that from this principle many lean minds would stir up a dust among the Savages even at this unseasonable time. Your application I believe will end among other measures in the appointment of Commissioners out of Congress to make a full inquiry into these discontents and particularly into a hellish design of Conspiracy, therefore I beg the State would immediately furnish me with the names of two Gentlemen capable of such a negotiation at Pitts-bourgh, that I may be ready for a nomination in case it should be necessary, for of myself I cannot fix on a suitable person.<sup>4</sup> I hope the attempt of imposition in the prices of the provisions westward will be thoroughly sifted and exposed, for without vigour in the warmest attacks against extortion, fraud &c with which alas! our unhappy land abounds, the horrid vices threaten the ruin of our Country and the vengeance of Almighty God! from such enormities good Lord deliver us. Mr. Galbraith is referred to the board of War and will be immediately dispatched, but I cannot be more particular.<sup>5</sup> I wish your intelligence of Lord Stormont may be true but it wants confirmation. I think with submission any application to Congress respecting the expence of the Stockades had better come immediately from Council, but best of all from Genl Hand which is most natural especially if he ordered them. I mention this because it



was urged upon me by Mr. Galbreath, and at this time particularly it would be unseasonable as we are immersed in business and I believe do at least twice as much as we were wont. The loss of Fort Mifflin is no deminution of the honor of the brave defenders, but this news is not confirmed yet I fear is too true. I am rejoiced at your mentioning an inquest you intended on the unhappy Officer you mention. The want of this of late in our State among other things had much distracted my mind, a thousand things call for the particular attention of the Legislature when assembled, and I wish I had time to enumerate many things that occur but this may be subject of a future letter for I am forbid adding but that I am most respectfully, Sir, Yr. most obt. hume. Servt. Danl. Roberdeau

P.S. A Gentleman is just come in upon me and contradicts the taking of fort Mifflin.

I have not even time to read this over therefore pray do not introduce me into Company in such a Desshabille.

I have not time to speak of Brown, he is refered to you, pray take Care of this friend to American *Independency* and do let us be imposed on by such a miserable Toll.<sup>6</sup> My thanks to Mr Secretary for his attention and to Coll. Bayard. I have not a moment for either of them, I beg to urge on them a trifling business formerly mentioned concerning taking a book. My respects to the President on his return and to Council.

RC (PHarH).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> This report was not brought in until November 22. *JCC*, 9:953-58.

<sup>3</sup> See Roberdeau to George Bryan, November 15, 1777. The committee to whom this matter was referred brought in a report this day, which was debated and adopted on the 20th. See *JCC*, 9:941-44; and Henry Laurens to Thomas Wharton, November 21, 1777.

<sup>4</sup> The following day Congress elected Samuel Washington, Gabriel Jones, and Joseph Reed "commissioners to proceed to Fort Pitt," but when Reed declined the appointment George Clymer was appointed in his stead. See *JCC*, 9:944-45; and Henry Laurens to Joseph Reed, November 23, 1777.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Galbraith, who had presented a catalog of Indian depredations experienced in Westmoreland County to the Pennsylvania Council, had been introduced to the Pennsylvania delegates in George Bryan's November 14 letter to them. *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:3-4; and *PCC*, item 69, 1:439-40.

<sup>6</sup> See Henry Laurens to George Washington, this day, note 1.

## Jonathan Elmer to John Hart

Sir,

York Town 20th Novemb. 1777

As my Term of Delegation expires in a few days, & business of Importance requires my attendance elsewhere, I propose leaving Congress tomorrow. The State of New Jersey will then be unrepresented.

I thought it my duty to acquaint you with it, & to request the Assembly immediately to send forward one or more Delegates from the State.

I have made it my business ever since I have had the honour of a seat in Congress to attend as constantly as possible. Whether I have discharged the important trust reposed in me by my constituents to their satisfaction or not I must leave to them to judge. I can however with truth declare that I have at all times exerted myself to the utmost of my slender abilities for the good of My Country & in particular of the state which I have had the honour of representing.

Congress hath at length compleated the Confederation. It is now printing & will be sent forward in a few days for the consideration & approbation of our Legislature.

The distance of the public Treasury of our state from my place of abode when at home, & my not having had an opportunity of waiting upon the Assembly when sitting, have prevented my receiving any money for public services through the treasurer's hands. I received 300 dollars of Mr. Clarke in July last for which I gave him a receipt & for which he engaged to account to the Assembly. Since that I have drawn on the Continental Treasurer for 700 dollars, to be charged to the State of New Jersey & for which I expect to account to the State.

The expence of attending Congress upon the most æconomical plan I have been able to draw, amounts to considerably more than the sum of 20/ a day. I rely on the generosity of the Assembly to make me such an additional allowance as they shall deem adequate. Observing to you Sr. that my expenses for the 7 weeks I have attended Congress in this place, for supporting myself & one horse amounts to £60. The Delegates from every other State have from 5 to 8 dollars a day & in general complain they cannot subsist on the pay allowed them by their respective States.

I have the honour to be, Sr., your most Obedient & very Hble  
 Servant, Jonathan Elmer

RC (Nj). Addressed: "Honble Speaker of Assembly, N. Jersey."

## Cornelius Harnett to Thomas Burke

Dr Sir

York Pensylvania Novr. 20. 1777

Our affairs at Headquarters seem to remain much as they were when you left us. The River has been as well defended as could possibly be expected, but Our brave Coll. Smith was a few days ago obliged to leave Fort Mifflin in ruins to the Enemy. Bob Morris still thinks the Enemys Ships will not be able to get to Philadelphia this

winter; others are very doubtful, for my part I anxiously look for the time of the river being froze over; this seldom happens before Christmas. We can not find the reinforcement from N. York yet arrived, but Genl Howe hourly expects it, some say 3 some 5 thousand. Genl Washington's Strong reinforcement from Gl. Gates' Army will be at head Quarters tomorrow. If you was here you would think a General Attack should be made on the City immediately. Others imagine that Genl. Howe may, in the Course of this winter be Starved out, but I think we have no right to expect two British Armies in One year to Surrender. In my next, however I will if I can, send good News. The Expectation of the people is great, they believe as soon as Gates' Victorious Troops arrive at H Quarters Genl. Howes Army will be ruined. I am also of this Opinion.

Coll. Martin has been Tried by a Court Martial or Court of Inquiry, I dont know which On his behaviour at German Town, and acquitted. Our Brigade (the high Officers of it) are exceedingly anxious to have a Genl. Officer Appointed. I wish it were done. You know the Delegates Concluded to take the Opinion of the Genl Assembly. I wish this Could be speedily done. You know better than I do how our Colls. stand as to Rank, Martin, Sumner, Polk I believe. As far as I can find from the Officers I have Conversed with, They wish for Sumner & Clarke, this might Cause several Resignations. We have too many Officers for the number of men; you know Congress Catch at resignations with great Eagerness. A New board of War is Appointed. Genl. Mifflin, Mr. Hamilton<sup>1</sup> & another Gentleman I think the Adjutant General of the Army. Genl Mifflin resigns his Office of Qr. Master General, but holds his rank of Major Genl. without Pay.

Your favourite *Confederation* is at last finished, it only waits to be Printed & sent on by the President to the Legislatures of the Several States for their Approbation, with a pressing Letter from Congress on that Subject, which you will soon See.<sup>2</sup> Our Finances are in such a Scituation, that unless the States agree immediately to tax as high as the People can possibly bear, the Credit of our Money must be ruined. Another very Large Emission must take place, there is no preventing it. The Treasury board see the fatal Consequences of this Measure—But they also perceive when we have no Money, we shall have no Army. The Loan Offices are already drained to the utmost farthing. The Prospect before us is truly distressing—we must however Continue further Emissions. I tremble at the Consequences. A Defeat of Genl. Howes Army must I think be Attempted, should we Succeed we shall be on our Legs again, I wish the whole force of America could be Collected to Effect this grand purpose. Our worthy and agreeable friend Mrs. Trist is well. I shall soon send my Carriage for her & Mrs. Ross, they intend a Visit to Mrs. Ross's relation in this Town.



For Gods sake get the Assembly to recommend Genl. Officers for Our Brigade. As soon as Coll Sheppard joins them, they will Consist of at least 2000 rank & file. They are exceedingly uneasy. They are at present Commanded by the brave McDugal, yet they imagine they appear Contemptible in the eyes of the Army, not having One Genl. Officer from Our State. They insist they have according to the Proportion of men, a right to a Major General & two Brigadiers. I am Dr Sir, Your Affectionate & Ob Servt, Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.]For Gods sake endeavour to get some Gent. appointed in my stead. I cannot stay here any longer with any pleasure.

RC (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> That is, Robert H. Harrison.

<sup>2</sup> The November 17 circular letter that Congress sent to the states with the Articles of Confederation is in *JCC*, 9:932-34.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Pensylvania 20 Novemr. 1777

I this day received your Scolding Letter of the 30th ulto. which is the 5th I have recd since I left Cape Fear; I can say with truth that I have written to you more than twice in a Month since I left home. I sent you, Mrs. Harnett, Mr. Hooper & Mr. Maclain particular Accounts of the Battles of Brandywine & German Town, together with every transaction Since at Saratoga, North River &c. If you do not receive them I can not help it. I am convinced Letters are Opened in Our Post Office & not Suffered to pass to the Place intended. Since Congress have been in this Town it has been impossible to write by Post, as it passes through at no certain day only Comes in late at night & Setts of[f] very early in the Morning. All the Members Complain of this & we shall in a few days have an Office in the Town, I assure you I have been obliged to Catch at transient Oppertunities and many times wrote in such hurry that I could only write a few lines to let My friends & family know I was well, Mr. Pen has more Leisure than I have, I never in my life went through so much fatigue, being Obligated to Sit all day in Congress & often very Often in the Treasury board till 11 at night.

I have told you in several of my Letters that Nothing can be purchased here but at a most exhorbitant Price, no Distiller either White or Black to be got at any rate or indeed Victuals to eat, in this once plentiful Country. I tell you again the 9th or 10th time that Jackey was very well about a Month ago. Mr. Gillon has been detained much Longer than he expected which gives me an Oppertunity of answering your Letter. We have indeed been very unlucky in the



fighting way in this Quarter but the Success of Genl Gates has made some amends for our Misfortunes here. Fort Mifflin is Certainly taken by the Enemy & it is supposed they will at last get their Ships up the river, some imagine by this means Genl Howe will be enabled to keep possession of Philadelphia this winter. A large reinforcement from Genl Gates' Army will in a day or two Join Genl Washington. Perhaps we shall soon see a reverse of fortune, Genl Howe also expects from N York a Strong reinforcement. The Public have been much Abused in regard to the Numbers of Genl Washingtons army. It never exceeded 16,000 Including Militia which did him little service in either Battle. We have Supposed Howe could not consist of more than 10,000, but it is imagined by the best Judges to exceed that number now, after the great Losses they met with in the two last Actions. We are generally too apt to lessen the Number of Our Enemys Army, & Exaggerate that of our own, which is bad Policy. We have no Press here, I can therefore send you no papers. I wrote Mr Hooper & Mr Maclain<sup>1</sup> by way of New Bern a few days ago & beg you'll forward the inclosed immediately. The Indians have been of late very Troublesom about the Neighbourhood of Fort Pitt, have murdered several of the inhabitants, burnt their houses & destroyed their Grain &c. We hope a Speedy Stop will be put to their Devastations & that they will be reduced to the necessity of defending their own Towns, as the war will no doubt be carried Speedily into their own country.

Congress have finished the Confederation. It will be sent by express to the Assemblies of the several States for their Consideration. I heartily desire to be at home, & whenever I get there I shall with pleasure give up this very disagreeable & troublesom Office. I have wrote my friends to beg they would send some person to relieve me. Tell Mr. Purviance I sent his Letter to his brother Jno. I hear he is in New Jersey. Make my Compliments to Mr. Quince & all my friends. Mr. Hills father died a few weeks ago in Boston. Coll Buncomb we are told is a Prisoner in Philadelphia taken at German Town, we hear nothing of Lieut Coll Erwin, it is supposed he was killed in the field. They have been making rum to the Eastward out of the juice of Corn Stalks.<sup>2</sup> I shall soon send you the whole Process & am, Dr Sir, Your most Obed Servt. Cornl Harnett

[P.S.] I hope this letter is long enough.

RC (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> Congress had appointed a committee on November 15 "to collect and digest the late useful discoveries for making molasses and spirits from the juice of corn stalks, and report a plan for communicating the said discoveries to the inhabitants of the several states," but no report by it appears in the journals. *JCC*, 9:929.

## Richard Henry Lee to George Washington

Dear Sir,

York 20th November 1777

I have no doubt of being excused by you for not sooner answering your favor of the 24th last,<sup>1</sup> when you are informed that my ill state of health has prevented me from attending as I ought to the important matter it contains. I gave Mr. Jones the letter, that he might inform Congress of such parts as it imported the public they should be acquainted with. As it appeared by the letters of Gen. Mifflin that he objected only to serve in the Quartermasters department, that his health was returning, and that he was willing to continue his aid to the public cause, Congress appointed him one of the Commissioners of the new Board, because he is competent to the right discharge of its duties, because that would best suit his valetudinary state, and as shewing a just sense of his uniform, vigorous, and well founded patriotism. I have strong hopes, that by the skill and industry of this new Board, and from the right execution of business in that important department, you will in future find great relief. Gen. Conway has not lately been mentioned in Congress,<sup>2</sup> nor has there been much talk of an Adjutant General, since it is not certainly known whether Colo. Pickering will accept his new appointment. Mr. Flemmings character stands very fair, and so far as I am able to judge, would answer well in this commission. You will see in the inclosed what Mr. Sergeant says of him.<sup>3</sup> General Mifflin has proposed a plan for the Quartermaster department that appears judicious, and well fitted to answer the purpose of good service and Economy at the same time.<sup>4</sup> He would divide this department into its military and civil branches, the former to be filled by a person well qualified to discharge its duties, and the latter, again to be divided into Commissaries of Teams, of Forage, of Tents &c &c to be governed in their purchases by estimates from the Quarter Master general who is to touch no money but a moderate tho sufficient salary.

It [is] unfortunately too true, that our enemies pay little regard to good faith, or any obligations of justice and humanity, which renders the convention of Saratoga a matter of great moment, and it is also, as you justly observe, an affair of infinite delicacy. The undoubted advantage they will take, even of the appearance of infraction on our part, and the American Character, which is concerned in preserving its faith inviolate, cover this affair with difficulties, and proves the disadvantage we are under in conducting war against an old, corrupt, and powerful people, who having much credit and influence in the world will venture on things that would totally ruin the reputation of young and rising communities like ours. The English however, were not to blame in the business of Closter Seven.<sup>5</sup> That convention was left incomplete by the Commanders

who made it. Twas stipulated particularly that the Court of Versailles must ratify, and that within a certain time, which was not done until long after the time was elapsed, and before which ratification the Troops of Hanover had returned to arms. Upon this occasion the good faith of England is not impeached. It is greatly to be regretted that the situation of your Army unfits it for vigorous action, because it is very obvious that the enemies possession of Philadelphia this winter and the ensuing spring may produce consequences extensively injurious. You well know, Sir, how weak and divided the people of this State are from various causes. Those of Delaware are still worse. In this condition, with the infinite arts of our enemies, pushed up almost to the center of the above governments, and aided by the powerful means of supplying the wants fanciful and real of the people with all kinds of European goods and Salt, it will be no great matter of surprize if we were to find a total revolution in Pennsylvania and Delaware. Add to this, the ill condition of our finances which totter upon every seeming success of the enemy. It is not to be supposed that where so much is at stake G. Britain will fail to make most potent efforts to recover her honor and prevent her ruin. Upon this ground we may expect considerable reinforcements, and early as possible in the spring. With an Army much strengthened, Gen. Howe may effect purposes dangerous to America. It happens too, unluckily for us, that in order for us to support the credit of our money, the several States must of necessity impose large and immediate Taxes. This is the most delicate and difficult of all government operations even in old and undisturbed States. Yet it is unavoidable, and Congress have pressingly requested that it may be quickly and extensively entered upon.

It was most evident to discerning men that the change in the Commissariate at the time it was adopted would produce most mischievous consequences, yet such was the rage of reformation that no endeavors to prevent the evil could avail, and now I feel the most anxious solicitude for fear the consequences may disperse our army even in face of the enemy. A Committee is appointed to confer with the Commissary general and to try what can be done to avert the evil.<sup>6</sup> I wish they may be fortunate enough to hit upon a remedy. That there should be a want of flour amazes me, and proves great want of attention in the Commissary Gen. because I well know that any quantity might have been got in Virginia at a reasonable price. By our last dispatches from the West Indies, it would seem as if a war between France & England was inevitable, unless the meanness of the latter should restore all her Captures made from the former without the limits prescribed by treaty, and which have been made under authority of an Act of Parliament. But the royal spleen against America is such, that every consideration falls before the wish to subjugate this free country. Yet Mr. Bingham mentions that the



ministerial writings are calculated to rouse the national resentment against France. If so, 'tis evident they want to set Europe on fire that the smoke may cover them from the eyes of their injured country. Mr. Carmichael writes that Dr. Lee was returning to Paris from Berlin, having finished his business successfully at the Prussian Court, & Mr. Bingham says 'tis certain that the King of Prussia has opened his Ports to the United States, and that Portugal has deserted the interest of England, and acceded to the family compact. This is all good news, and will I hope furnish employment quickly for our unprincipled enemies.

My ill state of health will compel me to return home in a few days where I shall continue ardently to pray for your health and success.

I am dear Sir affectionately yours, Richard Henry Lee

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> This is a reference to Washington's October 28 letter to Lee. It can be found in the appendix of Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 37:541-45, where it was reprinted from the text published in the March 1911 *Century Magazine*.

<sup>2</sup> For the context in which Lee had previously discussed Thomas Conway, see Lee to Washington, October 20, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> In his October 28 letter Washington had recommended Edward Fleming, former deputy adjutant general for the New York department, as a candidate to succeed Timothy Pickering as adjutant general. Fleming also had the support of Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, who recommended him to Lee in the November 12 letter forwarded to Washington. "Mr. S. Adams desired me to write You on the Subject of an Adjutant General," Sergeant explained, "as Col. Fleming, he tells me, has been mentioned & is very little known. I have seen him, once, on some Business committed to him by the Jersey Assembly, of which he is a Member; but have heard a very advantageous Character of his Abilities, Industry & Skill, particularly in that Line." Washington Papers, DLC. Nevertheless, Congress elected Col. Alexander Scammell adjutant general on January 5, 1778. See *JCC*, 10:21; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:80-83, 245, 252, 297.

<sup>4</sup> Mifflin's proposed plan for the quartermaster's department was read in Congress on November 19 and referred to the Board of War, which was ordered to report a plan for reorganizing that department. Mifflin's plan was included in the board's recommendations that Congress read on January 30 and approved on February 5, 1778. But on March 2 Congress replaced this arrangement with another plan of reorganization that was based on the recommendations contained in a February 25 letter of the Committee at Camp. See *JCC*, 9:941, 10:102-3, 126-27, 210.

<sup>5</sup> In his October 28 letter Washington had stressed the necessity for using great caution in administering the Saratoga convention in order to prevent the British from returning the convention troops to the battlefield by spring. He suggested that such a breach of the convention would be a repetition of their action after the 1757 Convention of Klosterzeven—a convention signed by the defeated Duke of Cumberland that required his German troops to be returned to their respective countries. It was, however, subsequently denounced by George II, and British-paid Hanoverians were encouraged to return to arms under Ferdinand of Brunswick. J. Holland Rose et al., eds., *The Old Empire from the Beginnings to 1783*, The Cambridge History of the British Empire, vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1929), pp. 476, 478.



<sup>6</sup> Lee must have written the last part of this letter on or after November 22, as that is the date the committee to confer with Commissary General Buchanan was appointed and Congress received the intelligence from William Bingham and William Carmichael discussed below. See *JCC*, 9:948; and James Lovell to John Adams, November 22, 1777.

## Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant to James Lovell

Dear Sir,

Lancaster 20th Novr. 1777

I have recd. a Letter this Morning from Mr. Duane,<sup>1</sup> who I suppose is one of your Committee, on the Subject of printing the Articles of Confederation. I have done & am doing all I can in that Business but the Printer, on this as on all other Occasions, is tedious beyond all possibility of being hurried.<sup>2</sup> I have yet seen but the first sheet, which is printed off & there will be six in all. He encourages me to hope that he will dispatch one of these sheets every Day. What can I do? I had rather be a Hogg-driver than attend his press; but will do what I can to forward the Work.

Mr. Marchant tells me that Virginia has limited herself to the Ohio. I am glad to hear it. That Puts an End to the Subject of my last;<sup>3</sup> at least in a great Measure.

Things look gloomy enough below. We want a General; thousands of Lives & Millions of Property are yearly sacrificed to the Insufficiency of our Commander in Chief. Two Battles he has lost for us by two such Blunders as might have disgraced a Soldier of three Months Standing; and yet we are so attached to this Man that I fear we shall rather sink with him than throw him off our Shoulders. And sink we must under his Management. Such Feebleness & Want of Authority, such Confusion & Want of Discipline, such Waste, such Destruction will exhaust the Wealth of both the Indies & annihilate the Armies of all Europe & Asia. Twenty Thousand Recruits annually would be absolutely necessary to maintain an Army of forty thousand. I believe this is the most moderate Calculation. In the mean Time People are so disaffected to the Service that no more Recruits can be got. In short, I am quite a Convert to Abraham Clarke's Opinion; that we may talk of the Enemy's Cruelty as we will, but we have no greater Cruelty to complain of than the Management of our Army.

I am, Yours sincerely,

(*Jona. D. Sergeant*)

P.S. Pray communicate to Mr. Duane the former part of this Letter. He does not even know that I have recd. the Confederation. The latter part—all I can say is that You are a Man of prudence.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Not found. Lovell and James Duane were members of the committee appointed on November 13 "to revise and arrange the articles of confederation agreed to, and to prepare a circular letter to the respective states to accompany the said articles." *JCC*, 9:900.

New Jersey delegate Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant, who had moved to Pennsylvania early in 1777 and been commissioned attorney general of the state on November 1, was in Lancaster with the Pennsylvania Council of Safety. Accordingly, the New Jersey Council and Assembly omitted him from the new set of delegates to Congress they chose this day. See *JCC*, 9:1017-18; and *DAB*. Sergeant left behind two documents bearing upon his congressional service in 1777. The first, a receipt dated June 8, 1777, stated that he had received "One hundred & Seventy Seven Pounds procl[amation] in full for my Attendance in Congress to the first Instant." Alphabetical Series, NjHi. The second, an undated account that Sergeant probably drew up in September 1777, contained a claim for "Attendance in Congress from June 1 to Sepr 7 inclusive 99 Days"—a total from which he subtracted "4 Days Absense." Continental Congress Miscellany, DLC.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Bailey printed the first set of the Articles of Confederation. *JCC*, 9:1087.

<sup>3</sup> Not found.

<sup>4</sup> Lovell must have sent Sergeant's letter to Samuel Adams, who shared their disenchantment with Washington, because it is now in the Samuel Adams Papers, NN. Both Sergeant's signature and the inside address identifying "Mr. Lovell" as the recipient have been inked out.

## Committee of Commerce to Oliver Pollock

Sir,

November 21st. 1777

We transmit herewith Copies of a Letter from the Secret Committee dated 12th June & one from this Committee dated 24th. Ult. The latter with a Duplicate of the former was sent by Capt Pickles via Charles Town So Carolina and we hope may in due time arrive safe. The present is dispatched by Capt. James Willing by the way of Fort Pitt <sup>1</sup> and will serve to inform you that Congress have determined that part of the Stores arrived or to arrive from Spain at New Orleans for the use of these States shall if possible be brought up the Mississippi & Ohio to Fort Pitt, and we are now to request that you will immediately set about carrying this their Determination into Execution. On Receipt hereof you are to engage five or six Boats such as have been usually employed in carrying Goods up the River, ship on board them Cargoes of the Stores assorted of all the different Articles. Take proper Receipts or Bills of lading and dispatch them as soon as possible. These Boats should not be deep laden. Moderate Cargoes to have them pretty buoyant will do best, they must all be well manned with careful resolute Men well attached to the American Cause & Interest, particularly the Patrons or Masters. They must also be well armed with Swivels or Cohorns and Muskets and found with sufficient Provisions. Mr. James Willing

will return with these Boats and to him you may commit your Dispatches, also the superintending Care of the Goods. Perhaps the Governor may be willing to send the Goods up under Spanish Protection as far as there are any of their Forts on the River. In this Respect & indeed in every other we must submit to his & your good Discretion to order this Business in the way that shall appear best calculated to bring the Goods safe & soon here at as light an Expence as possible.

With Respect to the Remainder we confirm the Instructions given 24th Oct. & 12th. June. We shall order a Quantity of Flour to Pittsburg against these Goods arrive there in order to load the Boats back again provided it can be obtained on any tolerable Terms but the Carriage across the Mountains comes excessively high.<sup>2</sup> We are &c.

P.S. If there are any Indian Goods we would wish them sent this Way. We inclosed you in our last letter three blank Commissions, and least they should miscarry we now inclose you three others to be filled up as before.<sup>3</sup> Sir

Tr (DNA: PCC, item 50). Enclosed with Robert Morris' October 11, 1782, report to a congressional committee regarding Pollock's services. Another transcript in *ibid.*, fols. 194-95, mistakenly dated "Novr. 25th," indicates that Robert Morris and William Smith signed this letter.

<sup>1</sup> This day Morris and Smith also wrote the following note to the commander at Fort Pitt, Gen. Edward Hand, under the place line "Commercial Committee, York in Pennsylvania." "You will receive this from the hands of Mr. James Willing who is charged with some Post despatches for New Orleans, and we are directed by the Honorable Congress of which we are Members to require from you One of the Continental Boats properly manned, armed & provisioned to carry him from Fort Pitt to New Orleans and hereby request you will immediately comply with this order. The Number of Men, Arms and quantity of Provisions is Submitted to your discretion, but it is of great Importance that Mr. Willing get speedily down, and that he has trusty faithful People with him. Therefore we flatter ourselves no Time will be lost in doing what may be needful." Continental Congress Miscellany, DLC. For references to Willing's expedition down the Mississippi, see Charles Thomson's Notes of Debates, July 24, 1777, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> Pollock's March 6, 1778, response, in which he acknowledges receiving this committee letter "dated the 21st November," is in PCC, item 50, fols. 57-59. For an appraisal of Pollock's contributions in behalf of Congress' interests in the Mississippi Valley, see Lawrence Kinnaird, "The Western Fringe of Revolution," *Western Historical Quarterly* 7 (July 1976): 253-70.

<sup>3</sup> In the postscript to the other transcript of this letter the commissions were identified as being "for Privateers" which Pollock was to fill "as You shall think proper & most beneficial to the States in conformity with the printed Instructions." PCC, item 50, fol. 195.

## Nathaniel Folsom to Meshech Weare

Dear Sir

York Town Nov'mber 21t. 1777

Inclosed I send you a Copy of the Confederation the Eighth Article of which Respects Taxation and has given me great uneasiness as I cannot see any Justice in the Rule therein laid down, for proportioning the Several States with the Charges of the Present War. In the first place it appears to me that one third part of the welth of the Southern States which consists in negroes, is entirely left out and no Notice taken of them, in determining their ability to pay taxes, notwithstanding it is by them that they procure their wealth.<sup>1</sup> Neither are we to have any advantage of them in proportioning the Number of men to be drawn from the Several States to Carry on the war, that being fixed on the Number of white Inhabitants in each state, so that by their negroes being left at home, they Can till their lands and git Bread & Riches, while some other States may be greatly distressed. In the next place the wealth that is in Some States more than there is in others by no means fixes a Proportionable Value on the Lands in Such States, which if this be true Seems to Prove that the plan laid down by Congress is not just. These are my own thoughts on this head, but refer you to your own better Judgment on them. It seems to be the Sence of Congress, that if any of the articles of Confederation Should be thought hard of, or unequal to any of the States, that they will make a Representation of the Same to Congress, with the reasons of their disapprobation to Such articles, in order if Possible to give satisfaction and ease to each and every of the States. The time fixed on for the Several legislatures, to determine on these great Points is by some members thought too short but I make no doubt but they will take as much time to deliberate thereon as may be thought just and necessary.

General Washingtons head Quarters is at the Sixteen mile Stone from Philadelphia, where it has been for a month Past. Several strong detachments are further advanced some at Germantown & a Strong Picquit at the Rising Sun abought 4 miles from Philadelphia. A Considerable reinforcement from the northern army are on their march and in a few days it is expected they will join general Washington.

Whether any thing will be attempted or no is very uncertain. Yesterday we had an account that Fort Mifflin was evacuated. To day it is Contradicted. Be it as it will our People have maintaind that Post with much gallantry, and have harrassed the Enemy greatly.

November 22d. The news to Day is that the enemy have marcht fifteen hunderd men in order to attack our People at Read banck and that general Washingtons whole army are in motion and that general



Greens division had marcht to Reinforce that Post but this Wants Confirmation.

I am Sir with much Respect, your very humble Servent.  
Nathel. Folsom

P.S. I hope I shall not be left alone here this winter.<sup>2</sup>

RC (Nh-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> The New Hampshire Council and House of Representatives met on February 24, 1778, in a joint committee of the whole to discuss the Articles of Confederation. For the proceedings pertaining to their consideration of the articles, which involved a brief dispute over the merits of the eighth article, see *N.H. State Papers*, 8:774.

<sup>2</sup> On December 25, 1777, Josiah Bartlett and William Whipple were re-appointed delegates to Congress by the New Hampshire Assembly. *Ibid.*, pp. 746, 756.

## Henry Laurens to William Nichols

Sir,

21st November 1777.

Immediately upon hearing of your Captivity, I wrote to Colonel John Laurens requesting him to make to you a tender of my Services in Money or by other means as far as duty to my Country would permit.<sup>1</sup> I then beleived you have been in General Washington's Camp & that my Letter would have found you there. Your favour of the 18th which came to hand this Evening Shews me you are at Reading. I beg you will now accept of such offers as are intimated above & inform me in what respect I can make your confinement tolerable. I speak to you as to a Gentleman & know you are too much a Man of honour to ask any thing which my own honour would oblige me to refuse.

I perceive your first application is that I may Interest my Self with General Washington in order to procure your Release by Exchange, of this I Shall think maturely & take the opinions of my friends & if proper will apply to Congress upon the occasion. In the mean time I apprehend a Letter from your Self directed to Lord Howe or the Commanding Officer of the British fleet Sent open under cover to His Excellency General Washington, requesting of Lord Howe to propose an equivalent for your dismissal would be a proper first Step & I am very sure General Washington's humanity will do every act in the Case which he can think himself authorized to do.

You cannot be unacquainted with a demur to the Exchange of prisoners which took place some Months since & which we think is chargeable upon General Sir William Howe, that unlucky circumstance has hitherto been attended with more evils to the unfortunate

Americans, than to the other party, these, such of them I mean as by the fortune of War have been made prisoners, have experienced not only humanity but very great Indulgence, while our people, Officers & Men, who have been made Captives, have in general been treated with such Cruelty as you are not answerable for & therefore I will not insult you with a detail or complaint of particulars. The ground on which I have given you this Slight intimation I may inform you of at a future opportunity. The Stoppage of the Cartel which was formerly in motion did not Seem to have extended to Sea Officers & Men, an Officer of a Carolina private Vessel of War & one of his Servants who had been exchanged between New York & Boston long Since the Subsisting dispute which I have alluded to, lately passed through this Town on their way home. This may afford Some ground for your address to Lord Howe & possibly the Name of Capt Manly in return for your Self may be very acceptable to us. But this is merely my own opinion & the effects of my good wishes to you, that you may upon adequate considerations obtain enlargement & be restored to your family. I know you are as little of an Enemy to the public in America as your honour & function will allow you to be.

If you want money or other aid please to inform me & depend upon me for every thing that I can with propriety grant &ca.

LB (ScHi). Addressed: "Captain William Nichols, Reading."

<sup>1</sup>"This evening," John Laurens had reported to his father on November 9, "Capt Nichols of the Eagle packet with the Capt of an armed sloop, were brought to Head Quarters—they were made prisoners by a detachment from Capt Lee's troops, and as Nichols mentioned his being acquainted with some gentlemen of Carolina, Capt Lee gave him a recommendatory letter to me. The honest seaman . . . seems to be affected by his misfortune and expresses as hearty rejoicing at the welfare of President Laurens as if he were a loyal subject to his master." Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 73-74. See also Laurens to John Laurens, November 15, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Wharton

Sir

York 21st November 1777

The Representations lately made to Congress by this State as well as by General Hand of Inroads, Ravages & barbarous Murders on the Western frontier by Indian Savages, were duly taken under Consideration, & Resolutions have been formed for appointing Commissioners to repair immediately to Fort Pitt for enquiring into the Causes of the present disaffection of the hostile Indians, for punishing delinquent Officers, for Suppressing the threatened War & cutting off if possible the Source of these Evils. A Copy of these Resolutions extended & Certified I have the honour of transmitting under this

Cover, you will be pleased to lay it before the Legislature of this State, to whom it is earnestly recommended to vest the Commissioners with such powers as will enable them effectually to accomplish the Salutary purposes intended by Congress.<sup>1</sup> I should apprehend it will be necessary to extend the powers beyond the present appointment, to such Commissioners as may hereafter be authorized for carrying the Resolve into execution in order to guard against disappointment which would otherwise follow, in case of the death or refusal to Serve, of the three Gentlemen now elected.

I have the honour to be with very great regard &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 9:941-45; and Daniel Roberdeau to Wharton, November 19, 1777.

## James Lovell to Joseph Whipple

Dear Sir

York Town Novr. 21st. 1777.

I have to acknowledge yr. favour of Octr. 12th in which was inclosed the list of Numbers of the Tickets lost by me the 19th of Sepr. I have sent it to Baltimore to be published; and, as Messrs. Adams were going to Boston I have given a copy to them to be published in the Boston Papers. If you can persuade yr. Printer to republish the Advertizemt. in his Paper *pro bono publico*, I wish it may be done. But as I have an almost absolute certainty that a Pick pocket is the possessor of the Articles lost I hardly think it worth while to go on to spend money about notifications at such a Distance from the Scene of Theft. The utmost I expect is to prevent the Public being cheated by purchasing the Tickets.

I have nothing agreeable to tell you from this Quarter of the Continent. The Spirit of Enterprize is a Stranger in the main Army. You may expect so long as the War continues that 3 times more men will be lost in the *main* army by marching and countermarching over hills and thro' rivers than in *battles*. I should deceive you greatly if I lead you to look for any Thing favourable from the *main* army.

Fort Mifflin is lost after the bravest defence. The naval part of our Forces behaves well. They tell us from the *grand* army that our Gallies still maintain their Places of Command over the Cheveaux de Frize. The naval Force has not been seconded by proper Exertions on Shore. I am vexed, not without Reason; you will be so too 20 Times during this coming winter from the Accounts which you will have from the neighbourhood of Philadelphia. Great Part of our northern army is coming this way to be kept idle; except so much action may be allowed as will serve to wear out Shoes and Stockings. I have reason to think the Battle of Germantown was *the* day of

Salvation offered by Heaven to us, and that such another is not to be looked for in ten Campaigns.

Compliments to all Friends from yr. affectionate humb. Servt,  
Jas Lovell

RC (MHi).

## James Duane to John McKesson

Dear Sir,

York Town, Pens. 22d Novr. 1777.

I am greatly obliged to you for your acceptable favour. All the news I can collect I have by this opportunity conveyed to the Honourable Council of Safety. As it will fall, of course, into your hands, it is needless to repeat the intelligence. You soon will receive the Confederation, with an address to convene the several Legislatures to ratify it; and a plan of taxation, and for supplying the army on more reasonable terms. The wealth of the Indies would not support the war, as it is now conducted. Indeed, it is impossible longer to gratify the avidity of the people, who set no bounds to their sharpening and extortion.

Mr. Morris has not yet made his appearance, nor Mr. Lewis. I must have patience, for I dare not, in the present circumstances, leave our State unrepresented. My heart bleeds for the misfortunes of our friends of Kingston, and the eastern shore. Our implacable enemies seem to have taken leave of the feelings of humanity, and to exult in a predatory war, which would disgrace the fiercest savages. That God in whom we trust, will, I hope, inspire us with vigour and fortitude, and enable us to put a speedy termination to these trying calamities.

Adieu, my dear sir, and believe me, with truth, Your most obt.  
humble servant,

Jas. Duane

Reprinted from *Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 1:1091.

## James Duane to the New York Council of Safety

22d November [1777].

P.S. Fort Mifflin is at length evacuated by our garrison. The enemy got up their cut down Indiaman, fortified among other heavy cannon, with ten 42 pounders, and placed her between Fort Mifflin and Province island. Their capital ships at the same time were brought



up within a mile, and with two batteries (one within 500 yards,) they sent a torrent of fire into the fort, and for a whole day and night there was a continual blaze. This completed the destruction of the fort; the men were besides unable to stand to their guns being picked off from the Indiaman's tops; and finally after every effort becoming heroes they evacuated it in the night.

We have just received accounts that the two grand armies are in motion; it will terminate I presume in another battle.

Reprinted from *Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 2:439. A continuation of Duane to the New York Council of Safety, November 19, 1777.

## James Duane to Philip Schuyler

22d Novr. [1777]

A Board of War is *(constituted)* instituted of Commrs. not of the House. Mifflin, the adjutant general, & Secretary Harrison are in nomination. The first has accepted & is now here. He insists that it is essential you should be at its head, & that Gates also should be a member. When I see you I shall open my mind on this subject. Nothing is more essential than the proper Establishment of this Board. Fort Mifflin is evacuated. The Enemy attacked it with that Cut down East Indiaman fortified besides other heavy Cannon with [ten?] 42 pounders. She took her station between Province Island & the Fort. You know the situation—and will Judge of the Effect. The Defense has been so glorious that the Misfortune is not felt, tho' it will be most material.

RC (NN). A continuation of Duane to Schuyler, November 19, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir

York 28th [*i.e.* 22] November 1777<sup>1</sup>

The last I had the honour of writing to you was dated the 19th. Your Excellency's Letter of the 17th in which was inclosed Copy of a paper from Mr. Zantzinger & a Return of deficiencies in Clothing for the Army came Since to hand & have been presented to Congress & by their order Committed to the Board of War & Treasury from whence no Reports have yet come up, I am thereby left without Instruction for making the necessary reply.<sup>2</sup>

My present business is to forward to your Excellency under this Cover an Act of Congress of the 20th Inst. for appointing Commissioners for Indian affairs in the Western Frontier, & for divers other

matters the last of which is a request that your Excellency will Send Colo. William Crawford to Pittsburgh to receive Orders from General Hand.

I have the honour to be with every respectful Sentiment &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> The FC of this letter in the Laurens Papers, ScHi, is dated November 22. That the RC bore the same date is clear from Washington's November 26-27 reply to Laurens. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:108.

<sup>2</sup> On December 10 Congress approved the payment of \$12,000 to Clothier General James Mease to cover the money "advanced him towards the payment of cloathing, purchased by Mr. Zantzinger, for the use of Brigadier General Wayne's division." See *ibid.*, p. 76; and *JCC*, 9:1016-17.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir,

York Novr. 22d. 1777

We have this Evening a Letter from Mr. Bingham of Octr. 13th in which he tells us that the French General had recd. a Packet by a Boat which left Rochelle Sepr. 4th advising him of the destination of 5,000 Troops for Martinique the Transports being actually ready at Havre, Nantes & Bourdeaux to take them on Board.<sup>1</sup> An Embargo was to be immediately laid upon European bound Vessels to prevent their falling into the hands of the English as it was then thought at Martinique that war must have been declared at the date of the Letter. The French were working night & day at Brest, Rochfort and Toulon to get their marine in a respectable Force. Carmichael writes from Paris the 6th of Sepr. that war appeared inevitable.<sup>2</sup>

The british ministry are publishing the most irritating peices against the French in hope of drawing the people into a disposition for a war with France that such an Event may give a pretence for relinquishing the American contest of which he has at length a desperate view. Carmichael mentions that he had received a Letter from Mr. Lee who was "on his return from Berlin having finished his business successfully." No foreigners had subscribed for the English Loan tho' the advantages were the greatest ever offered except once: and all army and navy contracts were for 5 years which Mr. Carmichael says is a proof of war.

I feared I should not have opportunity to copy large Extracts from the well-wrote letters recd. before the post goes thro' this place Tomorrow, therefore give you these hints & a good Night.

James Lovell

[P.S.] You will consider that the within Intelligence has not been read in Congress—tis confidential to you.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> William Bingham's October 13 letter to the Committee for Foreign Affairs is in PCC, item 90, fols. 5-12. For a discussion of the French decision to reinforce their garrisons in the West Indies, see Jonathan R. Dull, *The French Navy and American Independence, a Study of Arms and Diplomacy, 1774-1787* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), pp. 75-81.

<sup>2</sup> Although Lovell clearly wrote that Carmichael's letter was dated the "6th of Sept.," he was undoubtedly referring to Carmichael's June 25-July 6, 1777, letter to Bingham, which Bingham had enclosed in his October 13 letter to the Committee for Foreign Affairs. PCC, item 88, fols. 23-30. For extracts from Carmichael's letter, see Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams, November 23, 1777.

## Marine Committee to the Eastern Navy Board

Gentlemen,

November 22d. 1777

We have received a Letter from John Bradford Esqr. the Agent for Prizes at Boston dated the 30th of October last informing us that the Schooner Lee, Captain Skimmer, was then out on a Cruize, and wanted to know our determination whether this vessel should be continued in the pay of the public after her return into port.

As we do not think proper that the States should hire armed vessels as cruizers we now direct that this Schooner be discharged on her return, and that you settle with the Owners and pay them the balance which may be justly due to them.

As Mr Bradford recommends Captain Skimmer in very warm terms as a Gentleman every way well qualified for a command in our navy, you will please to enquire particularly into his merits and if you think him deserving we would have you give him the first suitable Vessel which may be in your power.<sup>1</sup>

We are Gentlemen, Your very hble Servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> John Skimmer was appointed captain of the *General Gates*, but was killed in action during his first cruise in the summer of 1778. William J. Morgan, *Captains to the Northward* (Barre, Mass.: Barre Publishing Co., 1959), pp. 140-41.

## Marine Committee to Jonathan Hudson

Sir

November 22d. 1777

We have determined that the Continental Brigantine built under your direction and now called the Baltimore shall be fitted and prepared for the Sea immediately, and depend upon you to have this business done with as much dispatch as in your power we have directed Messrs. Samuel & Robert Purviance to deliver to you any

Rigging, Sail Cloth or materials which they may have in their possession belonging to the Public that shall be wanted and may be suitable for fitting this Brigantine,<sup>1</sup> therefore you will apply to those Gentlemen Accordingly and what they cannot furnish you must provide yourself on as moderate terms as possible.<sup>2</sup>

You will advise us of your proceedings and we are Sir, Your hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> The Marine Committee's brief note of this date to Robert and Samuel Purviance making this request is in PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book, fol. 114, and Paullin, *Marine Committee Letters*, 1:178.

<sup>2</sup> The following note was sent to Hudson on December 2 by the Marine Committee's secretary John Brown. "I am ordered by the Honorable the Marine Committee to inform you that the Baltimore is to be fitted out as a Merchantman. It is also their desire that should Captain Ward be such a character as you can freely recommend to be master of this Brigantine that you employ him for that purpose." PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book, fol. 117, and Paullin, *Marine Committee Letters*, 1:183.

## James Duane to George Clinton

Sir,

York Town, Pensy. 23d Nov'r 1777.

I am honoured with a Line in answer to several Dispatches lately transmitted to your Excellency; tho' I find by a note in your's to Mr. Duer that I am obliged for your attention to my respected Entreaties for leave to visit my Family. Tho' for want of a Relief It has yet produced nothing but Expectation. I hope however Mr. Morris is on his way.

The last Dispatches we receivd were from the Council of Safety on a delicate Subject which is now under the Cons' of a Committee.<sup>1</sup> To them I have written the present State of our military operations in this Quarter to which you'l be pleasd to be referred. Some foreign Intelligence having arrivd last night <sup>2</sup> & my Letters to that honourable Body being closd I have staid the Express to give you the Information. It is confidently asserted that a number of French merchant ships having been seizd by the British Cruizers, the Court of Versailles has instructed their Embassadour peremptorily to demand Restitution of such of Them as were taken out of the Limits prescribed by the last Treaty of Peace: and that the least Hesitation shall be considered as a Declaration of war; that 5000 French Troops are embarked for their West India Islands; that Wickes who commands a small continental Squadron in the European Seas has caused prodigious Consternation. That he has taken a multitude of Prizes particularly near Fifty from the West Indies. That the King of Prussia has opened his Sea ports to the American Ships & ap-



pears eager for our Commerce. In short that we stand in a respectable Light in Europe and that a war is become inevitable.

Congress have finally agreed upon Confederation & other useful Expedients to reestablish the publick Credit & the value of our paper money. I have the Honour to be with great Respect Sir Your Excellency's most obed't hum'e Ser't,  
Jas. Duane

MS not found; reprinted from Clinton, *Papers* (Hastings), 2:539-41.

<sup>1</sup> The "delicate Subject" was the convention between Gens. John Burgoyne and Horatio Gates. See the next entry.

<sup>2</sup> See James Lovell to John Adams, November 22, 1777, notes 1 and 2.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir.

York Town 23d November 1777

I had the honour of writing to you the 14th Inst. by the Express Fowler, since which Your favour of the                      came to hand covering several papers.<sup>1</sup> These were immediately Committed to the Board of War & remain in that Channel unreported upon, therefore I am not possessed of means even for filling the blank in the third Line above.

Congress having received various intimations of a breach of the Convention of Saratogo on the part of Lieutt. General Burgoyne & particularly a serious address on that head from the Executive Power of New York, have judged it their Duty to the People to make the necessary enquiries & for this purpose have formed several Resolutions under date the 22d Inst. a Certified Copy of which I shall have the honour of conveying with this. It is only needful for me to add the Voice of Congress repeating what is specially contained in the Resolves that you will be pleased to return an answer as speedily as possible.<sup>2</sup>

Finding the Gentleman who will bear this was returning immediately to Head Quarters at Albany & having received his assurances of expedition at least equal to any thing I can expect from the ordinary Express Messengers, I have determined in preference to commit the present dispatch which is judged to be of great moment to his Care.

I have the honour to be, with very great respect & Esteem, sir,  
Your most obedient & most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Cong.

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> General Gates' November 10 letter is in PCC, item 154, fols. 296-99.

<sup>2</sup> On November 5 the New York Council of Safety had written a long letter to President Laurens charging that the British had violated the Saratoga Convention by failing to turn over all their "Provisions, Arms, Artillery Stores and Ensigns of War, Tents, public Equipage, and the military Chest" and asking Congress to delay the projected return to England of Burgoyne and his army

until the terms of the convention had been carried out. After considering the council's request Congress resolved on November 22 to instruct Gates to investigate whether the required equipment and supplies had been surrendered but not to delay the embarkation of Burgoyne and his troops because of the inquiry. See *JCC*, 9:936-37, 939, 949-52; *PCC*, item 67, 2:87-91; and *Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 1:1075-76. See also Laurens to William Heath, December 27, 1777, and January 8, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear son,

York Town 23 November 1777.

Waiting for the Clerks of Secretary's has detained an Express which would otherwise have been dispatched last Night. The blameful delay afforded me however, a prospect of leisure for writing a little deliberately to you. This was soon closed by a General Fermoy who engrossed two hours of the Evening in order to present me with business which properly conducted could not have occupied those minutes—the remainder was stole from me I declare to you very honestly by a parcel of clever Scots in this House who would not allow me at so late an hour to go to the writing Table, & forced me to stay & hear their pretty songs—the Jades. This cost me an hour of Candle before day Light in order to dispatch a Messenger with a pointed enquiry whether the Convention of Saratoga has been kept perfectly whole on the part of Lt. General Burgoyne—an affair which I would not have talked of as from me although 'tis as common as any other topic. I hope there will be a pair of Boots prepared for you some day this Week & if I can get no other sort I'll send you woolen Gloves—I intend a few Camp-Shirts for you from a peice of Linen which I brought from Carolina—I must write to that Country for a supply of many articles & send a Waggon to bring them. I have in sight your last Letter of the 18th,<sup>1</sup> you will one of these days give me as many anecdotes as well as the best general Account you can, of the whole River proceedings from —— to the evacuating Fort Mifflin.

We are anxious to know the measures pursued by the Enemy after that event—with some difficulty to the Marquis's freind Monsr St. Colomba is gratified with Commission to be Captain.<sup>2</sup>

Baron Frey will return to Camp & probably offer himself as a Volunteer.<sup>3</sup> Congress refuses to employ him or any more of the adventurers from France. I should think Commissions as high as Captain to such as had seen service & good Company & whose English is tolerable might be granted—& work some reform in that Line. The Baron has emptied his Purse & plainly intimates a reliance on me to replenish it. These unfortunate folks have hitherto been only consumers of my time—there's now an appearance of consumpt

of Money to keep some of them from deep distress, what can one do? —& yet how can one alone do all? Adieu. Henry Laurens

RC (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> This letter is in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 78–80.

<sup>2</sup> On November 15 Congress had decided that the chevalier Morel de La Colombe, one of the French officers who had accompanied the marquis de Lafayette to America, "may be usefully employed in the quality of captain in the family of the Marquis during his service in the American service." See *JCC*, 9:931; and Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:18, 161n.6.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens had noted in his letter book on November 22: "Wrote to [Lafayette] yesterday by Express Johns & this day by Baron Fry with letters just received from France & a Letter for Colo. Fitzgerald." Laurens Papers, ScHi. None of these letters has been found.

## Henry Laurens to Joseph Reed

Sir,

York Town 23d November 1777.

Under Cover with this I have the honour of forwarding to you an Act of Congress of the 20th Inst. by which you are appointed a Commissioner for Indian affairs on the Western frontier of this State & the Paper will inform you particularly the ends which Congress have in view, it is ardently wished that the appointment may meet your acceptance, of which you will be pleased to give me notice with convenient dispatch.<sup>1</sup>

I am with great regard & Esteem, sir, Your obedient & most humble servant, Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (NHl).

<sup>1</sup> After Reed declined this appointment in a letter written to Laurens on November 30, Congress excused him from service on December 4 and on the 11th named George Clymer to replace him. See *JCC*, 9:945, 1001, 1016, 1018; *PCC*, item 78, 19:169; and Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton, November 19, 1777.

## Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams

My dear Sir,

York the 23d Novr. 1777

I need not make an apology for my paper because you know our choice of things here is confined within narrow bounds, as little occasion is there to excuse the slovenly manner in which this letter may be written, since you well know how seldom it is that we can command time in this busy scene. I had the pleasure of writing you lately by Capt. Romane, a young gentleman of worth who passes thro Boston in his return to his own Country.<sup>1</sup> Since that letter was written we have lost fort Mifflin, which our brave garrison was

obliged to abandon after a most gallant defence, in which all their guns were dismounted but two, and all the works beaten away to about a rod and a half. The enemy brought up their cutdown Indiaman between Province & Mud Islands and lay within Musket shot of the Fort upon which they discharged a most furious cannonade with 24 & 32 pounders, and from Cohorns and Musketry in their Tops, drove the Men from their guns. 'Tis said the Gallies did not do their duty. Notwithstanding this, it is the opinion of many that the enemy will not be able to get their fleet up to the City, unless they can get red bank, which, with the Gallies may yet prevent their raising the Chevaux de Frize. To remove this obstruction, we hear they have passed 3000 men over at Coopers ferry, and Cornwallis has crossed from Chester with 1500 more. Our force to oppose him is Brigadier Varnum's brigade of 1200, 4 regiments in Red Bank fort with the Garrison of Fort Mifflin, and Huntingtons Brigade lately sent over. We understand that the Army has moved down upon the enemies lines in consequence of their weakness by these powerful detachments. Thus we daily expect some interesting event. The confederation is not yet returned from press but we expect it will in a day or two when it will be sent forward, and with it will come this letter. We have strongly pressed the speedy consideration and return of the Confederation and we have urged the necessity of immediate and extensive Taxation, regulation of prices, and other measures of finance, œconomy, and effectual recruiting the army.<sup>2</sup> I know my friend Mr. John Adams will say the regulation of prices wont do. I agree it will not singly answer and I know that Taxation with Œconomy are the radical cures. But I also know that the best Physicians sometimes attend to Symptons, apply palliatives, and under favor of the Truce thus obtained, introduce (*radical cures*) cause removing Medicines. Let us for a moment check the enormity of the evil by this method, whilst the other more sure, but more slow methods secure us against a return of the mischief. The middle & southern States (particularly the insatiable avarice of Pennsylvania) having refused to join in the plan formerly, rendered the experiment on your part inconclusive and partial; therefore I do not think Mr. Adams's argument drawn from that trial quite decisive against the measure. I incline to think that the necessity of the case will now procure its adoption universally, and then we shall see what great things may be effected by common consent. The American conduct has already shattered and overset the conclusions of the best Theorists, and I hope this will be another instance. Two days ago I moved the immediate recall of Mr. Deane, which was agreed without dissent, and tomorrow is appointed for choosing a Commissioner in his place.<sup>3</sup> Our friends Mr. John Adams & Mr. Denny<sup>4</sup> are in Nomination, with some others. This appointment was strongly pressed on me in Congress, but my dear friend, rigid as you are in these matters,



I am sure you would have admitted my apology. I feel the obligations of public duty very powerfully, but when these duties can be better discharged by others, why may not the *private* ones be suffered to prevail? Why may not chari liberi have their weight, when such a sacrifice is not *necessary* for the public service. I remember that in some points our opinion differed respecting Mr. Deane, but I feel myself obliged to think that he has pursued his best judgment for the good of his Country when he made those distressing contracts, and perhaps his peculiar situation compelled him to carry them further than he might otherwise have done. Be this as it may, after Congress had so strongly determined concerning these, it would have been out of all character to have continued him. Yet this is a matter of great delicacy and I am not well satisfied with the whole of it. If our friend Mr. Adams should be chosen, I have earnest hopes that he will accept. The loss of time that will attend his refusal, independant of other considerations, renders it of much consequence that he should not refuse. Yesterday evening brought us a letter from Mr. Bingham covering one from Mr. Carmichael dated Paris June the 25 which contains the following passages. "Mr. Lee writes me he is on his return from Berlin having finished his business successfully. If our enemies are not successful they mean to close with us on the best terms they can, sensible that if this great effort does not succeed, they have little to hope in future. This is an animating reason for us to preserve in the glorious contest. The English have compleated their loan amongst themselves. No foreigners have assisted them, altho the terms to the Lender are better than any ever yet offered by that Nation except once. Foreigners know that they have yet several millions to fund for which they must offer still better terms. The Spaniards have refused the mediation of France & England in their dispute with Portugal, being determined to prosecute the war until Portugal makes reparation and demands peace. They have taken the important Island of St. Catharine on the coast of Brazil without loss & mean vigorously to prosecute their operations on the Brazils. This I have from *undoubted* authority, one of the *family Ministers*. An account prevails that the Indians of the east have fallen on their Oppressors & have taken Madrass. India Stock has fallen in consequence of this. Both France & Spain continue their Armaments, as if preparing for some great event. This obliges England to do the same. Of course all their Naval & Army Contracts are for 5 years and they employ as many Work men in the Dock yards as they did in the last War. From this circumstance you may judge, however different their declarations may be in Parliament, they have real apprehensions from this Court & that of Spain. It would render our negotiations with Prussia more successful, if a Tobacco Ship could by any means be pushed into Embden, which Ship might make her returns in Manufactures necessary for

us at 15 or 20 per cent cheaper than we can have them here. Cpts. Weeks, Johnson, & Nicholson have just destroyed 16 Vessels on the English & Irish coasts. I am dispatching Conynghame from hence on the same business. I begin to think War unavoidable." Signed Carmichael

Mr. Bingham's letter covering the above is dated Octr. 13th and contains the following important intelligence. "The General received a few days ago by a packet from Rochelle 4th Sept. the following intelligence. That a Courier had been dispatched with instructions to the French Ambassador in London to claim all French Vessels captured (without the limits settled by treaty to bound the approach of French Vessels to the coast of British America) by the English, which have been regularly cleared out for any French Ports, which requisition if not complied with, is to be the signal for leaving the British Court. The General has received orders to put every thing in readiness for war and to lay an Embargo on all Ships destined for Europe to prevent their falling into the enemies hands. The Minister informs the General that Transports are already engaged at Havre, Nants, & Bourdeaux for the transportation of 5000 additional troops to Martinique and Guadaloupe. At Brest, Rochford, and Toulon they work night and day, & the greatest preparations are making for the immediate commencement of hostilities. The General's plan is immediately to attack the English Islands, as his success depends on conducting his operations with such rapidity as to hinder any relief from being thrown in. The restitution of the Ship *Seine* & her Cargo is loudly demanded by the Court of Versailles. I mentioned in a former letter that Portugal had detached herself from the interests of Great Britain & had entered into the family Compact. Authentic advices mention that the King of Prussia has opened his Ports to the Americas." Wm. Bingham

The union of Portugal with the Bourbon compact is a most injurious affair for England, to which that wealthy Kingdom was a kind of Colony. This event has, I presume, been brought about by the success of the Spanish Arms in South America, by the death of the King of Portugal, and by the incapacity of England to assist her Ally. The above intelligence makes immediate war extremely probable in Europe. But the meanness of the Court of London will stoop to every thing rather than endanger success in trampling upon the liberties of North America. Perhaps the British Ministry begin to see the necessity of setting Europe on fire, that the Smoke may conceal them from the eyes of their injured Country. Gen. Mifflin has been here, and he urges strongly the necessity of having Gen. Gates to be President of the New Board of War. He thinks the Military knowledge and the Authority of Gates necessary to procure the indispensable changes in our Army.<sup>5</sup> I believe he is right. The capital

business of Congress for this winter is now over, and my ill state of health calls loudly for rest. I shall therefore withdraw in 8 or 10 days until the last of winter. I hope you will not forget to favor me frequently with the intelligence of your place. Where I am going is in absolute retirement, and will render more agreeable the news of the world. Your situation is one of the best and most frequent information I have now written you a long letter, one that might perhaps be construed trespass by any but a friend, I shall therefore conclude with assurances of my affectionate regard.

Richard Henry Lee

P.S. I formerly desired you might direct for me to the care of James Hunter Esqr. near Fredericksburg, but for the future the following will answer better: R. H. Lee of Chantilly, to the care of the Post Master at Leeds Town, King George County, Virginia.

My best respects to Mr. J. Adams. Be extremely glad to hear from him.

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> See Lee to Adams, November 15, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> For these resolves of November 22, 26, and 27, see *JCC*, 9:953-58, 968-71.

<sup>3</sup> Congress voted to recall Silas Deane on November 21 and appointed John Adams to replace him on the 28th. *JCC*, 9:946-47, 975.

<sup>4</sup> Francis Dana.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Mifflin had recently articulated his hope that Gates would come to Pennsylvania in a November 17 letter to Gates that he had written from Reading, where he had gone to join his family after the British capture of Philadelphia. Distressed at Washington's ineffectual defense against General Howe and at Pennsylvania's political collapse, Mifflin had submitted his resignation as major general and quartermaster general on October 8, but Congress accepted only his resignation as quartermaster general and on November 7 appointed him to the reorganized Board of War. At the time Lee wrote this letter to Adams, Mifflin was in York consulting with the Board of War, which reported the results of their conference with Mifflin the following day. See *JCC*, 9:792, 874, 936, 959-60; Henry Laurens to Mifflin, November 8, 1777; and Kenneth R. Rossman, *Thomas Mifflin and the Politics of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), pp. 106-15.

"You have savd our Northern Hemisphere," Mifflin had written to Gates on the 17th, "and in Spite of our consummate & repeated Blundering you have changd the Constitution of the Southern Campaign on the part of the Enemy from Offensive to Defensive.

"If you had remained with the Army we might have opposd but could not have counteracted the deep rooted System of Favoritism which began to shoot forth at New York & which has now arrivd to its full Growth & maturity. Repeated Sights & unjustifiable Arrogance combind with other Causes to drive from the Army those who would not worship the Image & pay an undeservd Tribute of Praise & Flattery to the great & powerful. The List of our disgusted patriots is long and formidable—their Resentments keen against the reigning Cabal and their powers of Opposition not despicable. The Campaign here must soon close. If no brilliant Action takes Place before it ends—if our Troops are obl'd to retire to Lancaster, Reading, Bethlehem &c for Winter Quarters—& the Country below is left open to the Enemys flying parties—great & very general will be the Murmur—so great & so general that nothing inferior to a Com-



mander in Chief will be able to resist the mighty Torrent of public Clamour & public Vengeance.

"We have had a noble Army melted down by illjudgd Marches—Marches that disgrace their Authors & Directors—& which have occasiond the severest & most just Sarcasm & Contempt of our Enemies. How much are you to be envied my dear General? How different your Conduct & your Fortune!

"A Letter from Col Mifflin receivd at the Writing of the last paragraph gives me the disagreeable Intelligence of the Loss of our Fort on Delaware. You must know the Consequence—Loss of the River, Boats, Gallies, Ships of War &c.—good winter Quarters to the Enemy & a general Retreat or illjudgd blind Attempt on our part to save a gone Character.

"Conway, Spotswood, Connor, Ross, Col J. Mifflin resignd and many other brave & good Officers preparing their Letters to Congress on the same Subject. In Short this Army will be totally lost unless you come down & collect the virtuous Band, who wish to fight under your Banner, & with their Aid save the southern Hemisphere. Prepare yourself for a Jaunt to this Place. Congress must send for you. I have ten thousand things to tell." Gates Papers, NHi.

Mifflin's letter is of special interest to students of this critical period of Washington's declining prestige and Gates' rising influence, for it has heretofore been identified as a letter written by James Lovell. Properly seen as coming from Mifflin's pen, it sheds additional light on the relationships that were formed among those who yearned to replace Washington during the winter of 1777–78, for a discussion of which see James Lovell to Horatio Gates, November 27, 1777, note 1. It also provides the "firm proof of [Mifflin's] active direction of the campaign to displace Washington" which Washington's most thorough biographer regretted being unable to find when he appraised Mifflin's role in this affair. See Freeman, *Washington*, 4:607n.106.

## Henry Laurens to Patrick Henry

Sir. York Town 24th November 1777.

I had the honour of addressing Your Excellency by the hands of this Messenger on his late return through York to the southward, to which I beg leave to refer.

My present business is to convey a Certified Copy of Resolves of Congress of the 20th Inst. resulting from a consideration of the Murders & Ravages which have lately been committed by Indians & of the distressed state of affairs in general, on the Western frontiers of Pennsylvania & Virginia. In order to effect the good purposes which Congress have in view the concurrence & aid of the Legislative Powers of those States has been thought necessary & therefore Your Excellency is requested to lay, as early as possible, the inclosed Paper before the General Assembly of Virginia.

I have the honour to be, With very great respect, sir, Your Excellency's Most Obedient servt.

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

P.S. I perceive Congress have recommended to vest the Commissioners who are to repair to Fort Pitt with "every necessary authority" &c & have named only three.



I think it possible that one or more of the number elected may decline the service. I therefore submit to Your Excellency's consideration the propriety of recommending to the General Assembly to vest the intended Powers in these or any other Commissioners who may be appointed by Congress, in order to prevent the pernicious delay which may otherwise happen.

H.L.

RC (NjMoHP). Addressed: "His Excellency, Governor Henry, Virginia."

## Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry

My dear Sir,

York the 24th Novr. 1777

I am just favored with yours of the 14th and thank you for it.<sup>1</sup> Every attempt to clothe the army is commendable, upon principles both of humanity and policy. As there is great Trade at Charles Town you have some chance for the woollens you want, altho this is the worst season for application on account of the many negroes they have to clothe in that Country. Either the Havannah or New Orleans are places where you may surely get Woollens and military Stores. Doctor Lee's letters have repeatedly assured us that at these places would be lodged the above articles for N America in general, and Virginia in particular. Small swift sailing Vessels sent to the former of these places from Virginia or North Carolina freighted with fine flour or Tobacco would not fail to return loaded with necessaries, and by pushing into some of the inlets on the Sea Cost of North Carolina might avoid the British Cruisers that infest our Bay and the goods be safely brot overland. This appears to me the most expeditious and the most certain way. By this method, the blankets & cloaths might yet be in Season to help the Soldiers before the winter is over. With respect to the loan of money at the Havannah or N. Orleans, I am not able to form a judgement whether it can be effected or not, the latter most probably, because Dr. Lee was able to get but a small sum immediately from Spain for Congress, altho he expected a larger credit from Holland thro the mediation and security of Spain. Add to this the great probability of immediate war in Europe, from which Spain will not be detached. I remember Dr. Lee in many of his letters to me previous to his visit to Spain said he should endeavor to negotiate a loan from that Court for Virginia & *(Maryland)* South Carolina to support (as he said) the credit of our paper money. Since his return from Spain he only mentions Cloaths & military Stores that wd. be lodged at Havannah & Orleans for our use. For the purpose of securing the credit of our money on a great emergence it were to be wished a credit could be obtained as you propose, and therefore I think it will not be amiss

to make the experiment. As for goods they may be had in the way of Barter. Indeed, I understood Dr. Lee, that the military Stores and Cloathing would be delivered without immediate pay of any kind. We formerly sent you the [extract] of a letter on this subject to Congress, which is all that [has] been received, unless it be a Spanish letter from the Governor of N. Orleans which Mr. Morris took away to get translated, and it has not yet been returned.<sup>2</sup> You shall have it when we get it. Monsr. Loyeaute declines the Directorship of the Academy. He is a young Gentleman of high family, of fortune, and ardent in pursuit of military glory. His father, who is a general in the Artillery of France has taken pains to instruct this his Son from his earliest youth, and he is, you may be assured, a Proficient. He is sober, temperate as a Soldier should be, and seems to have none of the fashionable vices. He says he came not here for Money, but to search for military honor, to assist America in establishing her freedom, but since he cannot be employed on that way, he shall return to his own Country, the business of an Academecian better suiting Age & infirmity with views of distant good, than youth, strength, and prospect of present action and immediate benefit to the public. I am concerned we [have] lost this Gentleman in many accounts. I am sure my Country will suffer for want of the knowledge he possesses and the rejection of him happened at an unlucky Crisis. All the rest of his Corps had just set out on their return to France because Congress would not comply with the Contact Mr Deane had firmly made with them in France and which had disgusted them greatly. This Gentleman remained at our request, and altho our engagement was not absolute, it was very strong, kept him from returning with his companions, and will I fear impress on all their minds bad ideas of the Americans and do us no service in France. This is well known here & the Delegates look rather small in the eyes of their brethren. I am sure we acted for the best, well knowing the utter deficiency of knowledge in this branch with us, its necessity, and having the best grounds for believing this Gentleman an Adept. It is certain we went rather too far, I am sorry for it, but we shall be less forward in future. Since I last wrote, the enemy have taken Fort Island, after a most gallant defence on the part of the Garrison, which retreated from the Island in the Night after all but two of their Guns were dismounted, and not [more than] a rod & an half of the works left. The enemy brought [up] their Cutdown Indiaman between Province Island & the [fort] from which they poured a most dreadful Cannonade from 24 & 32 pounders, and from their Tops the fire of Cohorns & Musketry drove the Men from their guns in the Fort. The better opinion yet is, that the Enemy cannot get ther Fleet up to the City until they first remove the Gallies, the Chevaux de Frize, and reduce Red Bank. To effect this latter purpose, we hear that Cornwallis with [3000] Men has crossed into the

Jersies, and that our Army is gone down to attack their lines now weakened by such a powerful reenforcement sent away. If so, we may expect important news in a day or two. One Brigade from the Eastern Army, with Morgans Corps have lately joined Gen. Washington. 20 Regiments are ordered from Gate's Army. The Rhode Island Expedition went no further than Providence by the Misconduct, 'tis said, of old Spencer. There will be an enquiry. Our last intelligence from the West Indies which covers news from France the 4th of Sept. gives us abundant reason to think that a War between France and G. Britain is on the verge of taking place if it has not already done so. The Fr. Amb[assado]r is ordered to demand all F. Vessels taken by England without the limits prescribed by Treaty, and to retire from the Court if the demand was not complied with. The Governors in the F. Islands are ordered to be in readiness for war, and to lay an Embargo on all Vessels bound to Europe to prevent their falling into the enemies hands. 5000 additional Troops are to be immediately sent to Martinique & Guadaloupe. Portugal has acceded to the Family Compact. Dr. Lee is returning from Prussia havg. finished his business successfully at that Court. The King of Prussia has opened his Ports to the Vessels of the United States, and Mr. Carmichael writes that a ship loaded with Tobacco to Embden would be attended with [salutary?] consequences. The Cargo would be returned in [manu]factures very usefull to us, and 15 or 20 per cent cheaper than from France. Cant we try this experiment at the proper Season which may be known by the Commercial Dictionaries. We expect daily to receive important news from Europe. My ill state of health, produced by bad water, bad air and excessive business will compel me to return home in a few days for the severity of the winter Season.

I am, with sentiments of affectionate [esteem and] regard, dear  
Sir yours,  
Richard Henry Lee

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> The contents of this letter indicate that Lee was responding to a letter from Henry dated November 10, 1777, which is in Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:115-16.

<sup>2</sup> Henry had requested a "copy of a letter rec'd from Orleans by the committee (I believe) of secret correspondence" and may have been referring to the Oliver Pollock letter received by Congress in October. See Committee of Commerce to Oliver Pollock, October 24, 1777, note 1.

## Richard Henry Lee to Roger Sherman

Dear Sir <sup>1</sup>

York the 24th of November 1777.

I am much obliged to you for your favor of the 3d which I should have answered sooner if I had not been prevented by ill health and very much business.



The surrender of Burgoyne is no doubt of great consequence to our righteous cause, and I could wish it were in my power to entertain hopes of a similar event at Philadelphia. Howe has made his situation very strong by double lines and these strongly fortified. They do also contrive to get provisions up from the fleet in small Vessels by means of a channel between Province Island & Fort Island. The latter of these places having lately fallen into their hands will facilitate this business exceedingly. Yet the better opinion is, that the fleet cannot get up so long as we hold Red Bank, and the Cheveaux de Frize remain covered by the gallies. To reduce the former we hear that Cornwallis lately crossed the Delaware with 3000 men. We are very strong at that place, fully so I hope to give his Lordship a sound drubbing. We every day expect important news from thence.

We have just received a letter from Mr. Bingham at Martinique, covering one from Mr. Carmichael at Paris dated June 25 & July 6. Mr. Bingham's letter is dated the 13th of October. Mr. Carmichael tells us that Dr. Lee is returning from Berlin having finished his business successfully at the Court of Prussia. That the English could get no foreigners to assist making up their last Loan, altho' the terms were higher than usual. That 'twas reported Madrass had been taken by the Natives, which had fallen India Stock. That France, Spain, & England were preparing with all possible dispatch for War, and that he thought it was inevitable. Mr. Bingham says the General of Martinique had just received information from the French Ministry Sept 4 that demand was made upon England for a delivery of all the French Vessels captured by the English without the limits prescribed by treaty for bounding the approach of foreign Vessels to the Shores of British America, and if this demand was not complied with the Ambassador was to leave the Court of London. That the General had orders to put the Island in a posture for immediate war, and to prevent the sailing of all Ships bound to Europe by Embargo least they should fall into the enemies hands. Five thousand troops were immediately to be sent to Martinique & Guadaloupe additional to those already there. Mr. Bingham further informs that the Ministerial Writers in England were endeavouring to raise the National cry for a War with France, meaning to secure personal safety at the risk of National ruin. Thus these desperately wicked men are for setting Europe on fire that the Smoke may cover them from the vengeance of their injured Country. These are good presages for us but yet I cannot help being astonished at the horrid iniquity of these Wretches. We have finished the Confederation and it will go forward to the States in a few days, with strong exhortation to consider and return it quickly. In this great business dear Sir we must yield a little to each other, and not rigidly insist on having every thing correspondent to the partial views of every State. On such



terms we can never confederate. If we take a view of the World, we shall find that numbers are by no means a just criterion to fix the relative riches of States.<sup>2</sup> Of old times take Tyre and Scythia, Germany and Carthage. In Modern look at Holland & Poland, England & Germany. But the truth is, that let wealth flow into a Country from whatever source, it will forever reflect value on the lands of that Country and they rise in value in proportion to the influx of wealth. Thus the value of lands in England has doubled & tripled as commerce has brought wealth into the Island. For my own part, I doubt extremely whether Virginia will not pay more by the present Mode than if it had been determinable by numbers. But I am satisfied that the mode now fixt is the most just, and so fiat justitia, ruat cœlum. We have recommended extensive taxation, sinking the provincial currencies, and regulating prices. I think that if the States will vigorously execute the recommendations of Congress, we shall, under providence, be a safe and happy people.

My ill state of health will compel me soon to return home for the winter season. I shall be particularly happy to hear from you, as well before as after you get to Congress, and for this purpose you will please direct to me at Chantilly Westmoreland County, to the care of the Post Master at Leeds Town in King George County Virginia. I live at some distance from the line of Post, and therefore propose to send weekly to the Office for such letters as my friends may favour me with.

I am, with sentiments of esteem and regard, Sir your most obedient  
 Servant, Richard Henry Lee

P.S. I am sorry that my predictions about Red Bank have not been fulfilled. Cornwallis got up before our reinforcements arrived, which has occasioned the evacuation of that Post, and the Continental Vessels that were there have been destroyed to prevent their falling into the enemies hands.<sup>3</sup> We understand that the Stores at the Fort were saved & the Cannon spiked. Gen. Green is in the Jerseys and he is very strong in Men, but whether there will be fighting nevertheless is to be determined by events. It does not seem clear that the enemy will get their Ships up because it is not certain they can remove the Cheveaux de Frize at this inclement Season. R.H. Lee

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> The content of this letter indicates that Lee was responding to Roger Sherman's November 3 letter to him, which is in the Lee-Ludwell Papers, ViHi.

<sup>2</sup> With typical New England arguments, Sherman had expressed opposition to the proposed method of establishing state quotas. "The mode adopted by Congress for proportioning the Quotas of the Several States according to the value of their Lands I think impracticable. The Number of Inhabitants I think will be the best that can be devised. The wealth of a people I believe will generally be found to be nearly in proportion to the Numbers that can be supported in a State & Wealth principally rises from the labour of Men.

As to the Negros, I Should be willing to do what appears equitable. If for the present it Should be agreed to exclude all under ten years old or any other age that may be agreed on & include the rest until a more equitable rule can be devised, & not make a perpetual rule at present, would it not answer better than to have the confederation delayed. For I am perswaded that the States can neither agree to nor practise the mode voted by Congress, & nothing effectual can be done to fix the Credit of the currency or to raise necessary supplies until some Rule of proportion is adopted. I doubt not of your readiness to do whatever you shall Judge may conduce to the general good and I am sure your Influence will have great weight in this affair." On the controversy over the basis of taxation, see also Henry Laurens to John Laurens, October 10, 1777, note 3.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of the evacuation of Fort Mercer and the destruction of the fleet, see Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, pp. 269-79.

## Board of War to the Massachusetts Council

Sir, (Circular) War Office November 25. 1777.<sup>1</sup>

I am directed to request you forthwith to transmit to the Board of War the several Acts of Assembly or Ordinances of your State for the regulation of your Militia, and that you will send from time to time any new Regulations on this subject.

I am to entreat your immediate Compliance with this request, and also that you will therewith send a List of the Officers appointed by your State in the Continental Army with their respective Ranks and Dates of Commission agreeable to a former Letter from the Board. As a new Department is established by Congress for the regulation of the Army it is hoped you will render them every assistance in their business and particularly in the Articles herein required.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest Respect, Your very obedient Servt.  
Richard Peters Secy.

RC (M-Ar). Addressed: "Jer Powell Esqr, Presidt. Council Massachusetts State." Endorsed: "In Council Decr. 15. 1777 Read & Committed to Moses Gill and John Taylor Esqrs to consider the within Letter and report what is best to be done thereon. Jno. Avery Dy Secy."

<sup>1</sup> This day Richard Peters also wrote the following letter to General Gates on behalf of the Board of War: "I am directed to enquire of you into the Character of a Monsr De Vernejout [Jean de Vernejoux] who has a Commission of Captain of Cavalry & served in your Department this Campaign. I am also to enquire into the general Conduct of the French officers who have served under your Command as it is suspected that many of them are so little serviceable as to be rather a Burthen than an Assistance to the States. In your Report on these Heads you will no Doubt distinguish such as deserve the Countenance of Congress that proper Provision may if possible be made for them & the Rest dismissed where it can be done with Propriety." Gates Papers, NHi.

## Henry Laurens to Richard Caswell

Sir

York 25th November 1777

The last address which I had the honour of presenting to your Excellency & which remains with the former unanswered was dated the 5th Inst.

My present duty is to Convey a Resolve of Congress of this date in which your Excellency is requested & enabled to perform an essential Service to the United States by appointing proper persons for purchasing & others for manufacturing in the State in which you preside certain articles of Leather for the use of the Army.

Congress have been encouraged to give your Excellency this trouble by the Delegates from North Carolina & have only in view the general Interest of these States. Nothing therefore is needful for me to add but a reference to the Resolve.

Just as I was about concluding, certain advice came to hand of an English Frigate of 28 Guns & two Transport Ships going out from Rhode Island having run aground near point Judah, that one Boat load of Men attempting to get on Shoar were overset & drowned, the rest, Ships & Men taken. Our people expressed hopes of getting all the Ships afloat again & in good order. This Account which I write in haste is crude, but the general fact may be regarded as true.

I have the honour to be with very great respect &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). TR (Nc-Ar).

## Richard Henry Lee to John Page

My dear Sir.<sup>1</sup>

York, Nov. 25th, 1777.

I shall endeavour to answer your several queries concerning Gen. De Borre, but in the first place permit me to lay down a certain general principle by which I am actuated.<sup>2</sup>

To counteract by all prudent and possible means a certain rage against foreigners that has unhappily possessed the American mind, and which I fear will injure our cause extremely in Europe.

Gen. De Borre is certainly an officer of rank and old service in France, and I believe of more military knowledge than many 10 Continentals Generals that I could mention. It is not true that any real misconduct at Brandywine occasioned the proceedings against him that happened in Congress. The matter stands thus. The Maryland troops behaved ill that day, and their advocate, Mr. Chace, with some other noisy members, attributed the cause to the insufficiency of Generals Sullivan and De Borre. Many aspersions was thrown on the characters of both these officers, and they were both ordered before a Court of Inquiry. The former passed through his



trial, and has been acquitted with much honor. The latter being old, passionate and fractious, was so disturbed that he, without knowing the consequences, hastily resigned. His enemies were satisfied, since all that they wanted was to remove him from the army. It is true that he afterwards desired the rank of Major General, but this is rather a fashion of his country than vice in the man. Eager after military honors, nothing stops their pursuit. I am of opinion that there is no person who can now produce any fact against the reputation of this gentleman. And therefore I might well say that he was rather unfortunate. Wishing him to return to his own country as little hurt with our treatment as possible, and knowing that he was to pass thro Williamsburg, I gave him the letter which has fortunately produced your civil notice of him. You do not mention Monsieur Balford [Valfort], to whom I gave a letter also, as he thought of visiting you on his way to Charles Town. This gentleman is of singular worth, and far above the action of our little paltry American Wits, who think it so clever to insult foreigners with their silly attempts at ridicule. It is certainly wise, dear sir, to be guarded against impositions from foreign Adventurers, but it is equally unwise to cast into one undistinguished group all of other countries, without distinguishing the good from the bad. This is a remnant of English unsociability and self sufficiency, which it becomes us now to get rid of as quickly as possible. In a former letter you desire to know my reasons for contending against Maj. Butler that Ticonderoga was an important post, and you concluded it was for the sake of argument.<sup>3</sup> I am not fond of such practice, and consider it the product of vanity or idle amusement. The truth is that Ticonderoga in its modern sense, being the place where the French fortified on the West side of Lake Champlain, is not a place of consequence, altho Mount Independence, opposite it on the East side, is a very important Post. It was seen that the former might fall, as it was not a very good situation, and required a great number of men to hold it, while Independence was very tenable by a much inferior force, and really of more consequence. It was judged proper to guard the public mind against false conclusions in case of advancements, and therefore it was that I more than once in public contended for the same thing that I then did with Maj. Butler. Ticonderoga in the Indian language signifies the congregation of many waters, and comprehends the whole district, but the modern meaning of the word is the old French fort. I will not trouble you here with a minute recital of the foreign intelligence we have received. Suffice it to say that a war between France and G.B. seems inevitable immediate. Its certain that all home-bound French West Indiamen are stopt Embargo to prevent their falling into the enemies hands. The French General has been ordered to put his hands into immediate state of defence, and is assured that 5000 additional troops shall directly be sent over.



Portugal has acceded to the family compact. Prussia has opened his ports to the Americans. M[adras] it is reported has been taken from the English by the natives. No foreigners would meddle with the last Parliament loan, altho the inducements were greater than usual. These are all favorable circumstances, yet we stand on precarious ground without immediate and extensive taxation, great economy, and wise attention to our military defences. How does it happen, my dear Sir, that the Barges of the men of war take our vessels at the mouths of our rivers, when we incur so great an expense in Gallies? These vessels, instead of being constantly at the mouths of the respective rivers, and the best of them in the Bay, looking the men of war in the face, are generally far distant in some snug creek or harbor, living at ease and diverting themselves on shore. This will not do. Our marines must be better managed, I am glad to hear we have got an able Engineer, and hope no time will be lost in strengthening and securing our harbors and rivers. Accessible as we are by water, this is of great consequence. Mons. Loyeaute declines the command of the Academy. He says that military honors and a desire to help secure the liberties of America by immediate action, not the desire of money, brot him to America. If he can't be in the War, he will return to his own country. His father is a General of estimation in the Artillery of France, and has taken pains with the education of his son, who is sensible, well bred, and an able officer in the Artillery branch; but we have lost him, and I hope the person prefered to him in the command of our Regiment will be able to serve the public. I am sure we want such knowledge extremely, and unless skillful men are appointed to the principal commands in that Regiment, how shall the great expense it will create be compensated by real utility?

Bad water, bad air, and bad every thing else, joined to excessive business, have injured my health and compels me to go home for the winter season. When I am at Chantilly I shall be glad to hear from you when you are most at leisure, or when any important news shall reach you.

I am, dear Sir, most affectionately yours,

Richard Henry Lee

MS not found; reprinted from *Magazine of American History* 2 (October 1878): 614-16.

<sup>1</sup> Although the recipient of this letter was not identified, Lee was writing in response to questions raised in Page's September 11 and November 14 letters to Lee, which are in the Lee Family Papers, ViU.

<sup>2</sup> In his November 14 letter Page had asked Lee to give him information about General de Borré's character and his conduct at Brandywine. See also John Hancock to Washington, September 13, 1777, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> In his September 11 letter Page had asked Lee to explain the statement that Ticonderoga was "a Place of little consequence," which Lee had made during a "Conversation with Majr. Butler of Chas. Town in the coffee House Porch at Williamsburg."

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir

York 26 November 77

I beg leave to refer Your Excellency to my last trouble unacknowledged of the 22d by Jones.

Your favor of the 23d containing the Six papers refered to I had the honour of receiving in the minute I was Sitting down to pay my present respects, the whole shall be duly presented to Congress to morrow.<sup>1</sup>

I am ordered to convey to your Excellency the undermentioned Resolves which will be found covered with this.

Of the 25th Inst., that Congress will Speedily take under Consideration the merits of Such officers as have distinguished themselves &ca. the Same date, for removing John Simpers at his own expence from Confinement in this State to the State of Maryland.<sup>2</sup>

this date, on means for reinlisting Men in the Nine Virginia Regiments whose times are nearly expired.

& for acknowledging the merit of Monsr. Fleury.

In consequence of the last mentioned Resolution I shall by this opportunity transmit Lt. Colonel Fleury a Brevet Certifying his Rank.<sup>3</sup>

This will go by the hand of a Brother of Simpers who was well spoken of in Congress by Mr. Rumsey from Maryland. The poor Man so deeply Interested himself in his Brothers Case as leaves no room to doubt his waiting upon Your Excellency with more than the dispatch of our ordinary Messengers.

I am with very great regard &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> This letter is in PCC, item 152, 5:199-203, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:98-101. The enclosed papers were letters by Washington and Gen. William Howe "relative to the exchange and treatment of prisoners, and also extracts of sundry sentences of courts martial against officers." *JCC*, 9:970.

<sup>2</sup> In reality Congress had approved a petition of John Simpers asking that "his brother, Thomas Simpers of Cæcil county, in the State of Maryland, [who] was taken into custody at the Head of Elk, in the said county, about the 1st week of September last, on suspicion of having dealt with the English army then at Elk," be returned to Cecil County for trial. *JCC*, 9:966.

<sup>3</sup> In a brief letter written this day Laurens notified François-Louis Teissèdre de Fleury of his appointment as lieutenant colonel—"in consideration of the disinterested gallantry" he had displayed in the service of the United States and most recently during the siege of Fort Mifflin. PCC, item 13, fols. 41-42; and *JCC*, 9:967.

## Elbridge Gerry to Joseph Trumbull

Dear sir

York in Pennsylvania Novr. 27. 1777

Congress have lately established a new Board of War, upon a Salary of 2000 Dollars per Year for each Member. General Gates is appointed president, General Mifflin, Colo Trumbull, Colo Pickering, & Mr Peters are Members. Three of the Gentlemen have accepted, there remain but two to give their Answers, General Gates & yourself. I doubt not, that the first will be in the affirmative, & hope that You will follow the Example, as thereby a prospect will be afforded of introducing Economy & Discipline into our Army, & affairs in general, without which America cannot be free & happy.<sup>1</sup> You was unanimously appointed, & from the Experience wch Gentlemen have had since You left the Department of Commissary General, of the Incompetency of their Friends to fill the Office, I doubt not that You would have had the offer with the Power of Appointing, I form my opinion from the Temper of the House when it was proposed, the D C Generals of purchases, had You been here to have executed it, & there had been a Certainty of your Acceptance. I know not your Sentiments on the Matter, but however they may be, I most ardently wish that You may accept of this Appointment for many Reasons. Colo Reed was nominated & would have been appointed, had it not been known to Gentlemen, that your Situation with respect to each would not admit of your sitting together at the same Board. I think there is not the least Doubt of this Fact. Your own affairs need not interrupt your immediate Attendance, as the Super Intendence of all the Commissaries in the eastern & northern Department is with the Governor & Council of Connecticut, who may displace & appoint at pleasure, & can direct the issuing Commissaries to receive the provisions now on your Hands, & your Accounts may be settled without a constant Attendance on the Commissioners.

The succession of Errors wch have taken place in the Commissary's Department, have reverberated on Congress, & had the Gentlemen Who were the Cause thereof been troubled with an Attention to the Business of rectifying them, I should not have regretted the Consequences, but this Burthen has unreasonably fell on those Who opposed the Errors from the beginning, & there seems to be a general Conviction that the Business never will be carried on by some of the present officers.

The affairs of Congress go on to our utmost Wishes. Confederation is finished, a Tax of 5000000 on equitable principles is levied on the States, a recommendation to confiscate & make Sale of the Estates of Traitors is sent to each State, the Money to be invested in loan office Certificates, And hereafter appropriated by the respective States. Recommendations to the States to meet & fix the prices of Labour, internal produce, & Imports &c, to call in their Currency by



Loan or Taxes, to open Subscriptions for the Continental Loans in each Town & District under proper Regulations to aid the Loan offices, to supply with Cloathing the Officers of their respective Bata-lions, at prices proportioned to their Wages, Charging the Surplusage to the united States under suitable regulations, & to give Vigour to the execution of their Laws, are also past by Congress. I hope soon to see the Treasury Office upon a new Establishment, & that your Brother the P M General will be a Commissioner, his Salary is augmented to 125 Dollars per Month, but I think him too valuable for that office, altho it must be acknowledged an important one. By the latest Intelligence from abroad, a War between France & G Britain appears to be inevitable. The Enemy have obtained possession of Delaware River, from the Delay of the Army to support Fort Mifflin & Red Bank; I think that an Enquiry into this affair, & the Rhode Island Expedition will necessarily take place. I remain sir, with much Esteem yours Sincerely,

E. Gerry.

P.S. If you decline this office, it must have all the Effects so far as it respects yourself of giving up the Cause; a Measure that my Friend will never consent to, after having endured greater Toils than may be expected in future.

General Stevens is broke for Drunkenness.<sup>2</sup>

RC (CtH).

<sup>1</sup> See Henry Laurens to Joseph Trumbull, this date, note.

<sup>2</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:89.

## Henry Laurens to Joseph Trumbull

Sir

York 27th November 77

Under this Cover extract from the Minutes of Congress, I have the honour of conveying to you which Shew that by a Vote of this present date you are appointed a Commissioner of the New Board of War consisting of Members not in that Assembly.

It is necessary further to intimate that your early attendance upon the Duties of that Office will be of great Service to the public & that it is therefore the particular desire of Congress.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be &ca

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Endorsed by Laurens: "Under Cover to his Father."

<sup>1</sup> Trumbull was elected to the Board of War this day but never took his seat. He resigned in April 1778 because of ill health. See *JCC*, 9:971, 10:363; and Shipton, *Harvard Graduates*, 14:105.



NOVEMBER 27, 1777

account of the office of a colonel general  
 with the want of his fundamental to the  
 welfare of the army and the peace of the  
 commander in chief in shaping his troops  
 to execute his orders. The rank of Major  
 General which was given me is obsolete  
 requisite for his office and should be revised  
 with proper authority to give entire  
 instruction, and it is clear at some point  
 there is no inspector in the army and  
 under an army general - however, for  
 my appointment is productive of a  
 command and I am most agreeable  
 to your excellency's request in regard  
 not solicited for the place, I am very  
 ready to return to France where I have  
 pressing business and this I will do  
 with the more satisfaction that  
 experience there to be useful to the  
 cause.

Yours With Respect

I am, Sir, Dear Sir  
 I am, Sir, Dear Sir

## James Lovell to Horatio Gates

Dear General

York 27 Novr. 1777.

I fear you will have condemned for wilful neglect of the last opportunity of writing to you by Express, but the accuracy of our new President, after the remissness which had been too often evident since my joining Congress, took me by surprise.

This present Carryer will perhaps throw you into a dilemma. We want you in different places, but most of all in a third which you are not called to ballance about. We want you most near Germantown.<sup>1</sup> Good God! what a Situation are we in! how different from what might have been justly expected! You will be astonished when you come to know accurately what numbers have at one time and another been collected near Philada. to wear out stockings, shoes and breeches. Depend upon it for every ten Soldiers placed under the Command of our Fabius 5 Recruits will be wanted annually during the war. The brave fellows at Fort Mifflin & Red Bank have despaired of Succour, and been obliged to quit. The naval departments have fallen into Circumstances of seeming disgrace. Come to the Board of War, if only for a short Season.<sup>2</sup>

I hope the last Express did not cause any Uneasiness to you, as the drift of the Proceedings of Congress was by no means intended to throw any slur on your acceptance of the Convention; But to come at a true idea of Burgoyne's Conduct.

We hear his men have behaved so as to oblige the Guards to fire upon them. This information however is not well authenticated.

Upon a *motion made* some time ago Genl. Schuyler is permitted to tarry & look after his private affairs, and St. Clair is *permitted* to do the same upon *seing his name* in a council of war at what is generally, by the inconsiderate, called the *grand* army. Since our Resolve was forwarded, I see Kalb, Knox and St. Clair are a council reporting for the Evacuation of Red Bank as incapable of bearing a Seige.

Such kind of Counsel seems to be the relish of this Quarter.

I expect you will judge me to be in a very sour humour. I am so. For if it was not for the defeat of Burgoyne and the strong Appearances of an European war, our Affairs are fabiused into a very disagreeable posture. Poor McDougal lays at the point of death. Conway has resigned and many spirited Officers are discouraged by an overbalance of languid Counsellors. There has indeed appear'd a little stroke of Discipline in the Dismission of Stevens and a number of inferior Culprits from the Service of the States. I wish this may have a suitable Effect upon Cowards, Thieves & Drunkards, for such are the Crimes which have caused the Dismissions above mentioned.

With affectionate Esteem, Yr. humble Servt,

James Lovell

RC (NH*i*).

<sup>1</sup> Lovell was probably the most outspoken of the delegates who became openly critical of Washington and his military tactics during the fall of 1777. While General Gates and the northern army had forced the surrender of the army under Gen. John Burgoyne, Washington had generally remained on the defensive and suffered two serious defeats. It was not surprising, therefore, that when Washington refused to mount an offensive to drive the British from Philadelphia after receiving large reinforcements from the northern army, Congress appointed a committee on November 28 "to repair to the army . . . to consider of the best and most practicable means for carrying on a winter's campaign with vigour and success."

Despite mounting criticism of Washington in and out of Congress, the reorganization of the Board of War with Gates as president, and the appointment of a committee to confer with Washington on a winter campaign, there does not appear to have been any serious effort to replace Washington as commander in chief. But it is also evident that men such as Lovell, Thomas Mifflin, Benjamin Rush, and Jonathan Dickinson Sergeant would have welcomed an opportunity to replace him with Gates. Still Washington's critics were put off when the committee sent to camp endorsed, albeit reluctantly, Washington's defensive posture. And much of their remaining fire was deflected by an emotional controversy that almost simultaneously blazed up around Thomas Conway, a French colonel of Irish ancestry who had been diligently serving as a Continental brigadier general since May 13, 1777.

While commanding the Third Pennsylvania Brigade, Conway had proven his professional abilities in the battles of Brandywine and Germantown and had even received commendations from Washington himself. Nevertheless, there was growing animosity between Washington and Conway because of Conway's occasional refusal to obey orders and his contradictory behavior in declining to offer advice in councils of war while being openly critical if plans went awry. Conway had also been angered by the September promotion of Johann de Kalb to major general, because Conway had outranked Kalb in the French army and his contract with Silas Deane specified that he would not be junior in the American army to any man who had been his junior in France. Conway thus managed to embroil himself in the Deane recall movement while giving comfort to Washington's critics and found himself at the center of a new episode early in November when Washington received information from Gen. William Alexander that Conway had openly disparaged the commander in chief in a letter to General Gates.

Smarting from censure emanating from both the Congress and his officers, and sensitive to the recent contrasting success of Gates and himself, Washington attempted to strike at his critics through the highly vulnerable Conway. He wrote sharply to Conway, and later to Gates, voicing his strong displeasure and all but demanding apologies. But he received no satisfaction from Conway and Gates, and despite the open break between Washington and Conway, Congress on December 13 promoted Conway to major general and appointed him inspector general of the army, a decision that naturally convinced Washington and his supporters that a "faction" in Congress meant to embarrass him and force his resignation as commander in chief.

Throughout December and January Washington continued to feel himself in an embattled position, but the spring of 1778 brought the optimism of a new campaign and the renewal of hope that French military and naval aid would be openly offered. Washington ultimately emerged a figure almost beyond reproach, and his critics became quietly subdued. Gates, as president of the Board of War, carefully avoided confrontation with Washington, and when Conway offered to resign in April 1778 he was surprised that the offer was quickly accepted.



These issues have been analyzed critically and at length by Jonathan G. Rossie, *The Politics of Command in the American Revolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1975), pp. 174-212; Paul D. Nelson, *General Horatio Gates* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), pp. 156-85; and Bernhard Knollenberg, *Washington and the Revolution, A Reappraisal* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1940), pp. 37-92, 184-215. For the delegates' and Washington's principal correspondence on the subject see Henry Laurens' letters to John Laurens, October 16, 1777, and January 8 and 28, 1778; James Lovell to Horatio Gates, November 5, to William Whipple, November 21, to Samuel Adams, December 20, 1777, and January 20, 1778, and to Richard Henry Lee, December 28, 1777; Elbridge Gerry to John Adams, December 3 and 8, 1777, and to Henry Knox, February 7, 1778; Joseph Jones to Washington, January 22; Jonathan Bayard Smith to Joseph Reed, February 21; and Eliphalet Dyer to William Williams, March 10, 1778; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:29, 236-37, 249-50, 263-65, 337-38, 410-11, 437-41, 508-9, 528-29.

Lovell's criticism of Washington is discussed at length in Helen F. Jones, "James Lovell in the Continental Congress, 1777-1782" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1968), pp. 80-110.

<sup>2</sup> For another letter highly critical of Washington and effusive in praise of Gates, which heretofore had been erroneously attributed to Lovell, see Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams, November 23, 1777, note 5.

## Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board

Gentlemen

November 27th 1777

This moment we have received yours of the 24th instant informing us of the destruction of our small fleet down the Delaware. As we cannot immediately determine what directions to give you respecting the seamen belonging to the Vessels we think they may be employed for some time onboard the Galleys until some other way can be pointed out. We would have you by all means keep them together in good humour and in Action until you hear further from us on this subject.

We are Gentlemen, Your very hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

## Virginia Delegates to Patrick Henry

Sir. York in Pennsylv. Novr. 27th 1777.

Conversing with Monsr Loyeate, on the subject of what you are pleased to say the assembly have in contemplation for him, we find the plan quite the reverse of his wishes, and inconsistent with his ideas of being personally and quickly useful in the field. Of good family, and early trained to war by his father, who is a general in the Artillery of France, he wants to be in action, and hopes to acquire



glory by the good services of himself and the Corps he shall instruct. The probability of the war going south next Campaign, and the character he had learnt of Virginia, made him readily agree with the views of the Delegates to remain behind his Companions who are returning to France, in expectation of serving our country by introducing the knowledge of Artillery, in a manner consistent with his ideas of military character. We may yet avail ourselves of this Gentleman's abilities as you will see by the enclosed proposition,<sup>1</sup> which we pray you, Sir, to lay before the honorable Houses. We have many reasons for wishing this plan may meet with approbation. Because we are well convinced of its public utility. Because of the generous cordiality with which this gentleman accorded with our proposals, contrary to earnest solicitations of his countrymen to the contrary, and of others who wanted him to go to other States, and whom he has offended by giving ours the preference. And because, lastly, he is here left behind the rest of his Corps, who were departed before your answer arrived here. As Monsr Loyauté has been informed that the number of British Cruisers in the Bay of Boston renders it difficult to get safely out of that Harbour, he has agreed to accept the invitation of R.H. Lee to pass some time with him at Chantilly this winter, so that if the Houses accept his proffered service, a letter sent to him there, will occasion his immediate attendance in Williamsburg. He is of opinion that for the business of instruction it will be quite proper that we should be provided with six field pieces, and as there are many belonging to the Continent now laying idle at Charles Town, we have no doubt but that Congress will indulge our Commonwealth with six or eight pieces on application being made by desire of our Assembly.

We have the honor to be sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servants,

Richard Henry Lee.

Jos. Jones.

Francis Lightfoot Lee.

MS not found; reprinted from Henry, *Patrick Henry*, 3:128-29.

<sup>1</sup> Loyauté's proposition, which Lee copied and enclosed with this letter, is in Lee, *Letters* (Ballagh), 1:367-68. For further details about the Virginia delegates' efforts to secure Loyauté's services, see Lee to Henry, October 8, 1777, note 2.

## Eliphalet Dyer to Joseph Trumbull

Sir

York Town Novr 28th 1777

The Congress finding almost every department in the Army running into the greatest Confusion & disorder for want, as we apprehend of a proper Board Consisting of Gentn. well skilld in the Vari-

ous departments & who can at least for some time Constantly attend to the immediate concerns of the Army, & our board of Warr hitherto Consisting of Members of Congress who could not be supposed to have a proper knowledge of the several departments, & beside had not time to attend to them, Congress have Unanimously Agreed to Constitute that Important Board & to have it consist of such Gentn whom they think have the greatest knowledge of the several departments & abilities to discern & discover from whence the disorders arise & how they may be remedied, have therefore made Choice of Majr. Genll Gates, Majr. Genll Mifflin, Coll. Pickering present Adjutant Genll., Mr Trumbull late Commissy Genll. & Mr Peters, who has heretofore been Secretary of the Board of Warr to Constitute that Board, Genll Gates to be President & who is also to be Continued Majr Genll & to Act as such in the Army As Occasion may require. The Salary is at present established at 2000 dollars per Annum. Some were for 3000, & not quite a Majority for 2500. But considering the times, & in hopes & expectation that our Currency will soon regain its Credit it was thought best not for an Establishment to exceed 2000, and had better if Necessary some other way make an allowance for extraordinary expences to the present board, than make an Establishment at this time tho just, could not afterwards be reduced if our money in a great measure regained its Credit, & believe tho not certain that Congress will generously consider the present board over & above the present Establishment. As to your appointment as One, it was without any Sollicitation of those you might call your Friends or any movements from them, but by the Unanimous Choice not only of every State but of every Individual member of Congress & every State except Jersey & Delaware not represented. Therefore I hope not withstanding your past feelings, your present Interest & Inclination to tarry at home, & retire among the common Mass of private Citizens; Yet that you have not so lost your strong attachment to your Country, their Interest & Defense as to refuse them your Assistance in this present critical Situation of our Affairs & of the State of the Army, as to refuse your Aid & Assistance without which & some of the Other Gentn at least we have every prospect of ruin & destruction at least to the Army if not to the Whole Country. Coll. Reed was in Nomination & believe would have been appointed instead of Mr. Peters but Congress really was so Intent to avail themselves of your services & knowing the former Altercation & that it was possible you could not set with him in the same board with that Harmony which ought to Subsist entirely omitted him on that Account & Voted for Mr. Peters that there might be no difficulty in your way of Attending. I sincerely wish leaving all other cares & business that you would Immediately hasten to this place, take your seat in the board for the present with the Other Gentn who will be pressed to Attend as soon as possible, &

hope by Spring or by the Opening the Next Campaign that our several departments may be so reduced to Order and System as if you on Trial shall think best to resign your place, no doubt it may be done. I hope you have not yet Moved to Norwich. If you have or not if you think best leave Amelia with her Mother, but if your business is such, that she cannot leave Norwich if you keep any Store there which makes it Necessary, if you can find no body better, Oliver is a faithfull thorough ladd. You may call him off from where he is & place him there to take care of your Store in your Absence. This I only hint not knowing what your business is nor what help it will require. I readily percieve an Objection Arising from your Accounts with the publick you expect to settle this Winter, but that must be postponed, if Necessary for this service. I hope before this that your Stores eastward are either taken by Genll Heath or regularly delivered over as Congress have given every appointment Necessary both in the purchasing & Issuing department, to Govr Trumbull that there might be no failure in that quarter. As to Newes this way Nothing favourable. Inactivity & Confusion, a Naked Undisciplined Army, are the topicks of the day with us. We hope on the Junction of the Northern Troops a fairer prospect will open. Our Forts down the river have been oblidge to be Evacuated one after Another, Fort Mifflin first but not till it was all levelled by the Enemies Batteries & Ships. Fort Mercer at Red Bank soon followed for want of a seasonable reinforcement by Land on that side (when Lord Cornwallis pushd over with a large Detachment from Hows Army, joined by those from N York) or for want of a Vigorous push upon Genll How, when he had so much weakend his Army on this side the river. Our Gallies are now oblidge to retire up the river after setting fire to our larger Craft &c. The River now commanded by the Enemy, a Battle is supposed to have happened the Jersey side between Cornwallis & our Troops there<sup>1</sup> who were reinforced too late to save Red Bank by Genll Greens division in which was Genll Huntingtons Brigade. The Event we know not, hope favourable and do not quite despair of pushing Genll How from his quarters before winter is over. They now call for the brave New England boys who were with Genll Gates, but if they dont come this way hope they may plunder New York.

Rhode's Island blank & worse, an Enquiry will be made.<sup>2</sup> You were too true a prophet. News from Europe favourable, a French Warr with England apprehended Inevitable & soon if not before now taken place. He who guides the Wheels of Nature & over rules the Counsellis of Men, may yet we trust divert the Storm. My kind regards to Wife & family & dear Amelia. Am yours,

E Dyer

[P.S.] Let me hear from you on the Subject of this letter as soon as possible.



Confederation Closed & the other Important matters I wrote you then under Consideration & are forwarded to the several States for Confirmation &c.

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> Probably a reference to the November 25 skirmish near Gloucester, N.J., in which Lafayette routed a Hessian picket. See Jackson, *Pennsylvania Navy*, p. 280; and Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:156–58.

<sup>2</sup> See Henry Laurens to the Rhode Island Expedition Commissioners, December 15, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to John Adams

Sir. York Town Pennsylvania 28 Novem. 1777.

I have the honour of conveying under this Cover an extract from the Minutes of Congress of the present date which Certifies your election to be a Commissioner at the Court of France—had Congress given direction, or if I were acquainted with precedents, a Commission should have accompanied this notification. The deficiency shall be made up by the next opportunity—in the mean time permit me Sir, to congratulate with the friends of America upon this judicious appoint[ment] & to wish you every kind of success & happiness.

I have the honour to be, with very great Respect & Esteem, sir, Your humble servant, Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (MHi).

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir Yorktown 28th Novemr 1777

My last trouble was dated the 23d Inst. & conveyed by favour of Mr. Pierce.

By the present please to be informed, that Congress lately entered into Resolutions for establishing a Board of War to consist of five Commissioners not Members of the House. And I have received express orders to notify to you Sir, You have been elected a Commissioner & by the unanimous Voice of Congress appointed President of the Board, a circumstance strongly expressive of the high sense which Congress entertain of your abilities & peculiar fitness to discharge the duties of that important Office, upon the right execution of which, the safety & Interest of the United States eminently depend. I am further to acquaint you that it is the determination of Congress, not doubting of your concurrence, to continue Your Rank in the Army & not to confine you to the Board when your presence & Commands in the Field shall be judged more essential—and it is like-



wise given me in charge to intimate that your attendance upon Congress in order to enter upon business at the Board of War as early as you can with convenience, is earnestly desired.<sup>1</sup>

Permit me Sir, the honour of wishing you a good Journey & of repeating that I am with very great respect & Esteem, Your obedient & most humble servt.<sup>2</sup>

Henry Laurens, Presidt. of Congress

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:971-72.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter this day to Gen. William Heath, "Commander in Chief of American Troops in the Eastern District," transmitting a resolve that requested him "to take effectual care that fresh provisions be issued to the prisoners in the eastern district, and that the salt provisions be reserved for the army of the United States for the next campaign." Heath Papers, MHi; and *JCC*, 9:977.

## Henry Laurens to the States

Sir

Circular

York 28th November 77.

I had the honour of writing to you the 1st Inst. to which I beg leave to refer.

In obedience to the order of Congress I now forward the under-mentioned papers.

Three Copies of Articles for Confederation & perpetual Union between the United States of America.<sup>1</sup>

Copy of Address from Congress to the States respectively, recommending the immediate consideration of that important plan for Compact.<sup>2</sup>

Copy of Minutes & Resolves, urging the necessity for Taxation in each State in order to raise five Million Dollars in the Year 1778 for the Service of the United States & as one means for establishing public Credit, recommending also confiscation & Sale of the Estates of persons who have forfeited the right of protection—& for other purposes.<sup>3</sup>

These papers so expressive of the meaning & good veivs of Congress require no attempt to a more minute detail of their Several contents. I have therefore only to repeat the request of Congress that you will take the earliest opportunity of laying them before the Legislature in your State.<sup>4</sup>

I have the honour to be with very great regard, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient Servant <sup>5</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> For bibliographical information about this printing of the Articles, see *JCC*, 9:1087.

<sup>2</sup> This address, dated November 17, is in *JCC*, 9:932-34.

<sup>3</sup> These resolves were passed on November 22 and 27. *JCC*, 9:953–58, 971. Their provenance is discussed in Henry Marchant to Nicholas Cooke, August 18, 1777, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Laurens added this paragraph to the letter he wrote to Gov. Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut. “Your Excellency will likewise find with the above, copies of three other resolves—of the 22d October, empowering the Commissary General of purchases to use proper means for importing Salt, and for other purposes—of the 3d November relative to the appointment of Dep. Comms. of purchases and Issues &c of this date, ordering the transmission of the fore-mentioned copies and requesting your Excellency and the Council of Connecticut to give necessary orders for the removal of Salt to the North River and other matters, to which I beg leave to refer.” Governor Trumbull Letterbooks, Ct.

<sup>5</sup> Laurens added this postscript to his letter to Gov. Patrick Henry of Virginia: “Since writing as above two other minutes from the Journals of Congress are brought in by the Secretary & which Your Excellency will also find inclosed.

“25 November—requesting the appointment of a proper Guard over the Continental frigate building in Virginia.

“26th—Recommending the Re-inlistment of the first nine Regiments of Virginia Troops.” Signers of the Constitution Collection, NNPM.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir,

[November 28, 1777] <sup>1</sup>

I shall not in my great hurry repeat to you any of the matters which I have written to Mr. S Adams <sup>2</sup> as you can have them, on sight of him.

I expected Brother Geary would have written to you but he has just requested me to inclose two Letters which he opened in consequence of your orders; and to give his Compliments to you begging your excuse of his further silence as he is preparing to go on a Committee to Camp in the morning with Robt. Morris and Mr. Jones to have a confidential Conference with the General, which I hope will put an end to the Idea of *retiring* into winter quarters, an Idea too much entertained by our Military Officers. The Conference is to be with the General *only*.<sup>3</sup> I hope every exertion will be made in New England to lessen complaints abt. Cloathing. A rascally improvement is made of the charming appearance which some of *our* lately-arrived troops make in comparison of others. It is said that *now* it may be seen where the cloathing is that came in the Amphitrite. I mention this en passant to you. I shall write about it to camp as the malice of it deserves.

I am charged by all those who are truly anxious here for the best prosperity of our affairs in France to press your acceptance of the Commission which has this day been voted you. The great sacrifices which you have made of private happiness has encouraged them to hope you will undertake this new business. As one I hope that you will not allow the consideration of your partial defect in the

Language to weigh any thing, when you surmount others of a different nature. Doctor Franklin's Age alarms us. We want one man of inflexible Integrity on that Embassy. We have made Carmichael Secretary who is master of the Language and well acquainted with the politics of several Courts. Mercantile matters will be quite in regular channels and so not a burthen to the Commissioners. Alderman Lee, Morris and Williams will have got our commerce into good order by the time of your arrival. If you make the Language any Argument to deter you, consider that you may perfectly master the Grammer on your voyage and gain much of the Speech too by having a genteel French man for a fellow Passenger. You see I am ripe in hope about your acceptance, however your dear amiable Partner may be tempted to condemn my Persuasions of you to distance yourself from her farther than Baltimore or York Town.

Great as Brother Geary's hurry is he threatens to take his pen in hand because I am not enough urgent with you; he feels all the Callosity of a Bachelor. I am but too ready to pardon his hard heartedness on this occasion where the eminent Interest of my Country is pleaded in excuse for him.

Tyconderoga & Independence evacuated give room for a revengeful exertion against our Enemies in this Quarter with fresh force from the northward. But this and every other *favourable* circumstances encreases our necessity of having a strict politician in France, as the probability of Treaties grows with our good Luck and lessens with our bad.

I will add no more than my Love and Respects to you & yours sincerely,<sup>4</sup>

James Lovell

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> This date was supplied because of Lovell's explanation in the letter that Adams was "this day" elected commissioner to France, an action Congress took on November 28, 1777. *JCC*, 9:975.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> In the margin opposite this and a portion of the preceding sentence Lovell wrote "for yourself, and your discretion." For further information on the activities of this congressional committee at General Washington's headquarters, see Committee at Headquarters to Henry Laurens, December 6, and to Washington, December 10, 1777.

<sup>4</sup> Lovell may have enclosed in this letter Congress' November 27 resolve recommending the confiscation of loyalist estates to the states. A copy of this resolve, in Lovell's hand and to which he added the following queries, is in the Adams Papers, MHi.

"Query. How the Persons thus forfeiting shall be described?

"2. In what manner the Confiscation shall be Conducted?

"3. And whether any Law can be framed to oblige a Person who is Suspected to be indebted to any of those Estates and no obligation to be found, or even known to be indebted yet Cannot ascertain the particular sum &c.——?"

## James Lovell to Joseph Trumbull

Dear Sir

28th Novr. [1777]

I have recd. your favour of the 6th but not what you mention to have written the 2d from Providence, nor a Line from Spencer about his secret Expedition. The business you mention about Purchasers and Issuers has been patched up sometime ago. There is now full conviction of what some of us, here, together with you, prophesied months ago; and agreeable to a report of a committee appointed to consider of the Propriety of constituting a commissarial Board, Congress have determined to add a Gentleman to the new Board of War who might have a particular Superintendence of the Commissariate. Genl. Gates is chosen President, Mifflin, Pickering, yourself & Peters make up the Board.<sup>1</sup> The manner in which you have been chosen, both as to the assigned Grounds and the unanimity, is so honorary as not to leave you the chance of refusal, to say nothing of the determined and general Preference which has been openly given in Congress to you, by omitting one of the first named candidates;<sup>2</sup> who was also mentioned now again upon the proposed addition of two to the original number of 3, which had been intended to be a Board. I assure you that the Safety of our army is thought in a very great measure to depend upon your immediate acceptance. You will consider it as the first Board upon the continent; and, the Honor out of the Question, as a Place in which you can serve essentially your suffering Country, and I think serve it with less plague & anxiety than in yr. former condition.

If you should happen to be in Boston when this reaches you Mr. S.A. will communicate all I write to him. Our affairs are Fabiused into a confused situation, but yet by no means into a ruined one.

Genl. Stevens is dismissed with several inferior Officers by sentence of Court martial *approved* by Genl. Washington, which looks a little like firmness and rising Discipline. Cowardice, Theft & Drunkenness must take warning.

I will only repeat that I expect very speedily to see you, even if you do not tarry, which I pray earnestly you may, if only 6 Months, or as long as Gates does.

I shall not have time to copy the resolves about this matter. The Salary voted is 2000 Dolls. a yr. Yr. Friend & humb svt.

James Lovell

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the appointment of Trumbull to the Board of War, see the letters of Elbridge Gerry and of Henry Laurens to Joseph Trumbull, November 27, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> In the margin at this point, Lovell added in a miniscule hand "Jos. Read."



## Daniel Roberdeau to John Adams

My dear Friend

York Town Novr. 28th. 1777

I would not take pen in hand until I could reasonably suppose you safe arrived to your long wished for home, on which I now presume to congratulate you and sincerely hope you have met with Mrs. Adams and your Children well and every domestick concern to your entire satisfaction for all which I feel myself much interested from the sincere regard contracted for you in our short intimacy, which I shall be ever ready to cultivate whenever Opportunity offers.

I congratulate you or rather my Country in the choice of you this day as a Commissioner to France for the united States, in lieu of Mr. Dean who is recalled. Your domestick views of happiness was not consulted on this occasion, but the necessity of your Country for your Talents, which being devoted to her service, I expect a chearful acquiescence with a call so honorable, which I doubt not will prove a lasting honor to you and your Connections as well as a blessing to these States.

I should be sorry for the least hisitation. I will not admit the thought of your refusal of the Office which would occasion a publick chagrine. I wish you had improved the oppy. when here of studying the French language, which our friend Mr. Gerry is now doing. I would advise your taking French books with you & a French Companion; and if an Oppy. does not immediately present from Boston a trip to the West Indies and a passage in a French vessel to Paris would be of considerable advantage. Our deligent friend Mr. Lovel makes every thing unnecessary in the way of news, besides I am on an appointment to Lancaster which forbids lengthening out this Epistle further than to present my respects to Mrs. Adams and to assure you that I am with sincere regard, Dr. Sir, Yr. very obt. friend & Servt.

Daniel Roberdeau

P.S. My sisters & my Children desire to be remembered to you and yours.

RC (MHi).

## William Williams to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Hond &amp; dear Sir

York 28 Nov 1777

I wrote you sometime since that the Plan of Confederation was finished, after revising, correcting &c it was sent to Lancaster to be printed & is just returnd. & after a long delay & Consideration a Report has been made by the Comte, to Consider the result of the N England States &c & a number of important resolutions relating to

taxation &c &c are come into, & will be also transmitted, it is not my Fault, it was not done long ago, but it cant be helpd & tis difficult to explain, the reasons of delay in many Cases. But I hope it is not utterly too late. I mentioned in my last my apprehensions of the impossibility of maintaining the Forts &c on the river, which are most unhappily justfid, on the 15th Fort Miflin being torn all to peices & every Gun dismounted, & a most violent attack &c was abandoned, after as brave a defence as was ever made, the men &c saved. The Fall of Red Bank was then inevitable, Cornwallis pasd below with abt 2000 & met abt 2 or 3000 more lately from N York & preparing to storm, & it being vain & impossible to support it, the Garison retired the 20th, saved what they cod, spiked the Cannon &c & all our Shipping, Fire Craft &c &c save the Gallys, were burnt by their officers orders, some gally tis said as have run by the City. Maj Genl Baron De Kalb, sund[ry] other General Officers, beside Gen. Huntington with considerable Numbers, I guess not equal to the Enemy, were over & advancg to the relief of the Fort. There has been a very heavy Firing heard from that quarter since, probably an Engagement between them, the Event not known, probably of great import. God grant us good Tidings. Our Army are in great want of Cloathing &c.

Congress have established a new board of War, consisting of 5 Members, not of Congress. It is deemd of vast importance for the Regulation & supply &c of the army, & highly honorable &c & by the Influence of his Friends Col Jos. Trumbull is chosen a member. The plan was to have one versed in every Department, the Members are Genl Gates Presid, Gen. Miflin, Adj. Genl Pickering, Col Jos Trumbull, & R Peters Esq late Secrety. It is deemd of very great importance, as You will readily perceive by the Members appointed. The Sallery is 2000 Dols per An. & a struggle to get higher. & I have no doubt it will yet be raised & such fresh sums allowed as to satisfie the Members, if this dont. Bro Jos. has shewn so much inflexibility &c that I am not certain he will accept, I hope he will not rashly conclude against it, if he does I think he will injure his Country, & his own Character irremediably with Congress. It will also certainly be a disadvantage to your Self, & a Reflection on his Friends here &c & I think will be acting agst his duty to the Call of Providence. It is a Circumstance worthy of Note, that he had every Vote, & that Col Read was also in Nomination & was highly esteemed, but for the Quarrel between Them, obtaind but one Vote, so much did They prefer Mr Trumbull, to one who otherwise wod certainly have been chosen.

I have the sweet Satisfaction of knowing I have served my Country here with great Fidelity, & I hope to some good Purpose, & now the pleasing prospect of returning to my dear native Colony, who have employed better Servants.

I hope to set out next Mond. with Mr Law. Have not time to write my dear Mrs. Wms. Please to remember me tenderly to her & other Friends.

I am with great Affection, Esteem & Duty your unworthy Son & Servt,  
W Williams

P.S. On Fryd. the 21 the Motion made last July was revivd for recalling Mr Deane,<sup>1</sup> was again taken up & carried without a dissenting voice. He died at last very easie, tho there had been at sund. Times before, the most violent & convulsive Throes & Exertions on the same Question.

& this day Jno Adams Esq was elected in his room. He is not present & tis not certain he will accept but hope he will.

A Motion is also made, that it be left to the remaing Comisrs to judge on the Spot, whethr Mr D. may not yet be employed at some other Court. The Motion dropd, & I trust will never be carried.

RC (NNPM).

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the earlier motion to recall Silas Deane, see James Lovell to William Whipple, July 29, 1777, note 3.

## William Williams to Joseph Trumbull

Dr. Sir

York Town 28 Nov. 1777

I have no agreable to tell you respectg our Army or public Affairs, save that by Accos from Mr Bingham Agent at Martinique, that They hourly expect to hear a Declaration of a French War tho I can hardly Expect it at this Season.

Our Defenses on the Delaware are all gone. Fort Mifflin after the most brave defence & beaten all to peices & every gun dismounted it was evacuated the 15th at night & Red Bank followed the Example on the 20th as Cornwallis approached it with 4 or 5 thousand Men, carrying off their Stores & spiking their Cannon, so that the Enemy have the full Command of the River &c & their is not the least danger of Howes runing away according to the fears of some of our minds in Connecticut. Our Army are much in want of Cloaths, Shoes & Hose but I trust & hope in God that He will support & maintain our Cause, & give Us again that City in due Time.

Genl Gates, Gen Mifflin, Adj. Genl. Pickering, Jos Trumbull & Rich. Peters Esqrs. are elected &c to constitute a newly created Board of War, from which great things are expected, as you will be informed by the President. As you call your Self a plaguey obstinate fellow I had some Fears least You shod injure your Self, your Father, your Friends & more especially your Country, by refusing her Call & I trust that of Providence on this occasion. You may perceive how

honorable & important Congress account the Business by the Generals employed, & by the inclosed Resolve. I beg you will not suffer Prejudice or Passion to influence your Judgement, but coolly consider the nature & importance of the Subject & the Duty & Obligation lying on you to serve your Country in this station. Congress expect your usefullness especially in the Comissary Department, & assistance to regulate the abuses of that & so for the other great Departments in which other of the Gent. are particularly versed. It is of importance to be called by every voice as you was to this honble Service & Col. Read was sacrificed to you, supposing you cod not sit together. The Department is of very great Moment most certainly, & never was or cod be properly executed by a Board consisting of Members of Congress, if for no other reason it was impossible to give proper Attention & Time to both, & They are most heartily weary of trying, & if I was not quitting Congress shod have some personal Interest, in the new Boards coming soon. The pay is 2000 Dols. to Each, & I have no doubt but additions will be made e'er long.

I much dislike the new Regulation of the Comissa Department, but had no doubt Alterations wod take place, as They have already & very likely may further as occasion & Experience may require & if you had continued in that, I verily believe you wod have your Country a very real & great Service, & that the Army has suffered exceedingly by the inexperience of the rear officers & it is a bad & wrong revenge to wound your already bleeding Country, to come up with Congress, for a great mistake in my opinion, but by far the most I doubt not come into with the best Intention.

If Jack had really an Inclination to have continued in the Army I have no doubt he might have obtained Justice in the matter he complained of & wod have done real Service,<sup>1</sup> & been also a Brigr. Genl. instead of Wilkinson, had his Life been spared, but enough. I hope to see you before you can set out hither, designing homeward, if Mr. Law dont delay me next Monday. With Complimts to your Lady I am your Affectionate Friend & Brothr, W Williams

RC (Ct).

<sup>1</sup>For details concerning John Trumbull's resignation as deputy adjutant general for the northern department, see James Lovell to John Trumbull, March 16, 1777, note.

## Henry Laurens to Benedict Arnold

Sir, York 29th November 1777

In obedience to the order of Congress I now transmit to you a resolve by the House of this date intended to restore to you your Rank in the Army—to which is Subjoined a Resolve of the 12 Inst.



Confirming the Recommendation of a Board of Officers for Settling Rank & precedence.<sup>1</sup> These you will find under this Cover.

Permit me to assure you Sir I respect your Character as a Citizen & Soldier of the United States of America, that I rejoice at your recovery from the dangerous Wounds which you lately received in the defence of your Country, that I wish you perfect health & a continued Succession of honour, that I am with very great respect & Esteem &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Arnold's long quest for restoration of his seniority in rank is described in Willard M. Wallace, *Traitorous Hero: The Life and Fortunes of Benedict Arnold* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1954), chaps. 11-12, 15.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir,

York Town 29th November 1777

After I had Seal'd the Packet which you will receive with this, I was honoured by your favour of the 16th. The weather being extremely bad, I judged it would be no pernicious delay to detain the Messenger till after the sitting of Congress. In the sitting I reported your Letter & the several Papers which accompanied it, but received no Commands on the subject except an order to transmit a Copy of the Letter to General Washington.<sup>1</sup> I have therefore nothing to add but that I send a Copy of Articles of Confederation & that I remain in every sentiment of respect & Esteem, sir, Your very obedient servant,

Henry Laurens, Presidt Cong.

RC (NH).

<sup>1</sup> Gates' letter is neither in PCC nor the Washington Papers, DLC.

## Marine Committee to Paul Loyall and James Maxwell

Gentlemen<sup>1</sup>

November 29th 1777

Your letter of the 6th of October having come to hand and we deeming it necessary to lay the same before Congress, you will find enclosed herein some Resolves that have been passed in consequence thereof. To those Resolves we refer you for your Government in what relates to the safety and preservation of the Continental Frigates you are building against any attempts the enemy may make to destroy them. We trust to you to have this business properly executed and have no doubt but the Governor & Council will readily comply with what is requested of them.<sup>2</sup>

We have agreed that you shall purchase and lay in a sufficient quantity of Provisions for the use of your yards & for that purpose and to enable you so to do, we now enclose you a draft of Congress on the Loan office of Virginia for Ten Thousand Dollars which pass to our Credit. We expect you will be able to procure further sums for your drafts upon us, and are, Gentlemen, Your very hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> Loyall and Maxwell were superintending the building of two Continental frigates at Gosport, Va. Morgan, *Naval Documents*, 7:1065.

<sup>2</sup> See the resolves of November 25, which included a request that the governor provide a guard for the frigates. *JCC*, 9:964.

## William Duer to James Wilson

Dear Wilson,

Novr. 30th. 1777

I wish it was in my Power to send you more agreeable Intelligence concerning your Capital than I can at this Time. Fort Mifflin after a gallant Defence has been evacuated; and Red Bank has shard the same Fate. To what Causes the last is to be imputed I cannot at present Inform you, but I am afraid that Timely measures were not persued to send over a Detachment to oppose a Body of about Four thousand with which Cornwallis had crossed over into Jersey. Since this Event the Enemy have got up several of their Vessells to the City. This is the black side of the Picture. The Reverse I relate with more Satisfaction. We have received certain Advice that the Enemy have Evacuated Fort Independence and Ticonderoga after having destroyd all the buildings and thrown the Cannon into the Lake (except the Eighteen), and have retired to the Isle au Noix and St. Johns. They have also dismantled Fort Independence near Kingsbridge in the State of New York, and withdrawn all their out Posts to York Island. This shews their weakness in that Quarter; and their Determination to apply their Force to hold Philadelphia. However it will enable us to bend our Attention to one Object; and I still flatter myself that we shall be able during the Winter to strike a bold Stroke agt Mr. Howe, though he is certainly well fortified in his Front and has lately received from New York a Reinforcement of about 2500 Men. A Committee of Congress has gone down to Head Quarters the Members of which are Mr. Robt. Morris, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Gerry. The Motive of their Embassy you will be at no Loss I imagine to determine.<sup>1</sup>

On Monday the Marquis de la Fayette with about four or five Hundred Men attack'd a Picquet of the Enemy in Jersey of about 300, drove them, killed Several, and took twenty or thirty Prisoners. It is said he behaved with great Intrepidity; and I beleive with some Experience will make a good officer.

You may depend on my paying Attention to what you about Arms, and that I will not quit Pensilvania without paying you a Visit. As I write in great haste you will forgive all my Inaccuracies.

I am very Sincerely, Yours,

Wm. Duer

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> This committee had been appointed on November 28 to confer with Washington about "the best and most practicable means for carrying on a winter's campaign with vigour and success." *JCC*, 9:972.

## William Ellery to Nicholas Cooke

Sir,

York State of Pennsylvania Nove. 30th. 1777

Mr. Marchant before this reaches you will have informed you of my safe Arrival here after a long Journey; and of every thing material that ocured after his last Letter to you. The President hath transmitted to your Excellency printed Copies of the Confederation; any Articles of which that may need an Explanation Mr. Marchant will explain to the Assembly. The President hath also sent you all the recommendatory Resolves to the respective States which have passed since I have been here, which renders it unnecessary for me even to mention the heads of them. I will only observe that in the Report recommending a Tax of five Million Dollars to be laid on the United States our Quota was One hundred and twenty thousand Dollars; and that upon my representing the Circumstances of our State Twenty thousand were taken off and put upon Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup>

Congress have resolved that an Inquiry should be made into the Causes of the failure of the Rhode-Island Expedition, and the Conduct of the principal Officers concerned in it. The Mode for conducting the Inquiry is committed, and Report will soon be made.<sup>2</sup> Beside the public Benefit that may attend this Resolution it will be beneficial to our and the other States who furnished the Troops for that Expedition; for Congress by taking this Business in hand have by Implication acknowledged that the Continent is to bear the Expenze of it.

The Scene of War is so much nearer to Providence than York Town that your Excellency cannot expect that I should give you any News from that Quarter. You will before this gets to hand have heard of the Evacuation of Forts Mifflin and Mercer. The former made a most obstinate Defence, the latter was evacuated upon the Approach of Lord Cornwallis with a Detachment of about 2000 Men from the main Army and a small Reinforcement, supposed to be from New York, which joined him at Billingsport. Genl. Washington upon hearing that Lord Cornwallis had crossed the Schuylkil, had ordered



Huntingdon's Brigade to cross the Delaware, and join Genl. Varnum who commanded at Red Bank, and the next Day Genl. Green with his Division marched with the same Design; but they were it seems too late. Genl. Washington wrote Congress that Genl. Varnum had wrote him that We had saved the chief Part of the Stores in Fort Mercer and all but the heavy Cannon, and that the Council of War judging that the Contl. Fleet could not escape after the Fort was evacuated, had ordered it to be and that it was burned.<sup>3</sup> The Express who bro't the Letters from Genl. Washington, giving the above Intelligence, says that there was a heavy firing in Jersey last Monday but that the Occasion of it was unknown when he left Head Quarters; and yesterday it was reported that there had been a battle between Genl Green & Cornwallis. Genl. Washington wrote that Genl. Greene would give him Battle if he could do it with any Probability of Success.<sup>4</sup>

By a Letter from Genl. Gates of the 16th Instant the Enemy had evacuated Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, carrying off all the Stores & Brass Cannon. They burned all the Buildings and sunk the Iron Cannon in the Lake. He writes too that the Enemy had abandoned all their Posts on the North River, and that they had retired or were retiring from Kings Bridge.

I hope that our Troops may be able to keep the Field this Winter. The Force that Genl. Washington hath with him, aided by the hardy Sons of New England and the Militia that might be collected in this Quarter and from the Southward, might intirely destroy Mr Howe's Army this Winter, In Expectation of which glorious Event I continue to be with great Respect, Yr Excellency's most obedient, humble Servant,

Wm Ellery

P.S. In a Letter from G. Washington of the 26th Nove. he writes that he had just recd. the following Extract from a Letter from Genl. [Greene]. "The Marquis Fayette with about 400 Militia & the Rifle Corps attacked the Enemies Picket last Evening, kill'd about 20, wounded many more and took about 20 pris[oner]s. The Marquis is charmed with the spirited Behaviour of the Militia & Rifle Corps. They drove the Enemy about half a Mile & kept the Ground, until dark. The Enemys Picket consisted of about 300 and were reinforced during the skirmish. The Marquis is determined to be in the Way of Danger."<sup>5</sup>

By the last Letter from France and by One from the W. Indias it appears that there is a great Prospect of Hostilities being soon commenced between France & Spain and Great Britain. I forgot to mention this Circumstance in the Body of my Letter. WE

RC (R-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> Although this alteration in the quotas of Rhode Island and Massachusetts is not shown in the text of this "Report" printed in the journals by Worth-



ington C. Ford under the date November 22, it clearly appears in the manuscript text of the report. See *JCC*, 9:955; and *PCC*, item 19, 3:158.

<sup>2</sup> On December 11 Congress approved the report of this committee, which had been appointed on November 28, calling for the appointment of five commissioners to meet in Providence in order to investigate the abortive Rhode Island expedition. *JCC*, 9:975-76, 1018-20. For a discussion of this expedition and the inquiry into its failure, see Henry Laurens to the Rhode Island Expedition Commissioners, December 15, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> See Washington's November 23 letter to President Laurens, in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:100.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dr Sir

York Pennsylvania Novr. 30. 1777

Since my last by Mr. Gillon who has been detained much longer than was expected I have very little to ad, except an Authentic Account from Genl Gates of the Enemys evacuating Ticonderoga & all their Posts in that Quarter, they burnt all the Buildings & threw such of the Cannon as they could not Carry off; into the Lake. Genl. Green with about 5000 of the American Troops on Monday the 24 Instant we are informed had a Smart Engagement with about the same number of British on the Jersey side. Congress have as yet received no certain Intelligence of the event, We comfort ourselves with knowing that had Our Army been defeated we should have heard it before now. Genl. Howe we are informed has got 1 40-gun Ship & Several Transports up to Philadelphia as there is now Nothing on the River to Oppose them; some of Our Gallies & Other armed Vessels have got up the River above the City, such as they could not get up were burnt, the Loss of these Vessels is to be inquired into.

We are not without hopes of dislodging Genl. Howe from Philadelphia this winter notwithstanding the Series of misfortunes & disappointments which have attended our Army in this Quarter. One bold push may yet retrieve all. Genl Howe is apprehensive of this & is guarding all in his power against it. Could this Army be defeated, America is safe; Our whole Collective Strength ought to be employed to effect this grand Purpose. By the next Opportunity I shall send you the Articles of Confederation, they are at last Completed after being under the Consideration of Congress for Almost two Years; This has been the most difficult piece of Business that ever was undertaken by any Public Body, it is the best Confederacy that Could be formed, especially when we consider the Number of States, their different Interests, Customs &c &c. The Mode of Settling the Quota of Taxes to be paid towards the Common Expence is at last fixed by the Value of all Land held under Pattent or Deed in each

State. The Eastern people were much against this, knowing their Lands to be very Valuable, they were for settling the Quota by the Number of Inhabitants including Slaves, this would have ruined Poor No. Carolina, she has as many Inhabitants as Connecticut (almost) Tho the Land in that State would sell for five times as Much as the Lands in ours.

I have wrote to Mr. Jno. Mitchel to send Jackey to me,<sup>1</sup> there is a good School in this Town & I can have him under my own eye & will (please god I live) bring him home with me. If Mr. Mitchell should not be able to Effect this, I shall send for him. Let me know how Our Copartnership business goes on. I shall, I am afraid, have Occasion of a Bill for 2 or 300 pounds, I wish you would have one in readiness in Case I send for it. Ask Mr. Brice whither he could (or Tom Craike) undertake to purchase a Large Quantity of Pork this Season. I wish I could know what number of Barrels could be procured this winter in Our State & at what price. Tell those two Youngsters they are sad fellows not to write to me. Remember me kindly to all my friends, you know them better than I do. I expect you always shew my Scrawls to Mr. Quince, otherwise I should Steal an hour from business to write to him.

I am with esteem, Dr Sr, Your sincere friend & Obed Servt.

Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.] I have wrote Mr. Fredk. Jones Senr. 2 Letters<sup>2</sup> relative to a Bill he sent by me, & have received no Answer. Perhaps he has not received them. Tell him Mr. Shoemaker declined receiving the money, I have it now in a Bundle Sealed up & will send it to him if he desires it, or you may pay it to him there as he chooses. Mr. Shoemaker remains in Philadelphia, perhaps I may have the pleasure of seeing him there before the winter is over. I wish you would be so kind as write to him on this subject—with the News such as it is.

RC (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> Harnett's letter to Mitchell has not been found, but the brief covering note for it that he wrote this day to Robert Morris is extant: "Be so kind as to send the Inclosed to Mr Mitchell & procure me an Answer, which will oblige, Dr. Sir, your ob Servt, Cornl. Harnett." Emmet Collection, NN. "Jackey" was Wilkinson's nephew. See Harnett to Wilkinson, March 18, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear son

York Town 30th November 1777.

I beleive it was on Wednesday last I troubled you with 2 or 3 sides of Paper, a great deal of scribbling, to express very little.<sup>1</sup> Times are such with me as to leave none for reviewing or amending in any

Case, nor to Copy except Public Letters & in a few special concerns. The last 48 hours have been almost wholly employed at this Table in Congress, in that time I have had about 7 Hours sleep, I quitted the Pen at 10 oClock last Night & was at it again 1/2 past [ ] this morning. This was rather too much, I did not feel it, but apprehended it might be so, I stole to Bed again for two Hours but could not sleep. The Plan laid by Lord & General Howe for seizing Congress took full possession of my mind—neither in this Case did I fear, but being convinced of the Practicability of a successful enterprize of this importance, the mind was exercised in projects for guarding against the Evil. It would be an Evil to me individually of the first magnitude—little less would the mischief be to the States if the whole Representative should be carried off by the Enemy—however insignificant each Individual may be We are here Inmates with & surrounded by Enemies of the vilest hiew. The Archives such as they are, the Treasury such as it is, are here, but we have no Troops here to guard either our persons or the property of 13 States. 50 Enterprizing Spirits aided by any Number they could collect here, & we are well assured they [ . . . ] the Enemy in your Neighborhood have obtained the offer of 500, the whole business might be done. Gold will secure them a passage across Susquehanna & the Mischief would be 24 or 36 hours old when you should have received the first intimation. You will ask if we are well assured of the fact of 500, why don't we take measures. We may have evidence sufficient to convince our minds, tho' inadequate [for] the convincing suspected Persons—but why have not we taken measures in many other momentous concerns. Why were we not as active in July to guard against the Inclemency of January as we affect to be now in November—now perhaps when too late to enable our Troops to keep the Field. I did not fail to speak my sentiments, & so far, which was far as I, *almost unaided*, could [go], to do my Duty—soon after my arrival in this Country—I spoke of means for guarding against the disaffected—of the necessity for providing Clothing by times—of the preservation of Delaware—of the ruinous State of our funds—of the amazing misconduct of dealing Money out by Millions to particular Persons, under those accursed four words—"he to be accountable," & totally neglect, I say totally neglect to demand Accounts. I should tire us both were I to proceed to say all I could on this topic. I will conclude for the present lamenting the fate of the few honest Men, among whom I class your General—but believe me there is a rottenness in Denmark, I have seen more than prognosticks.

I think we cannot fall, I am sure we shall not, unless it shall be by insidious hands. Our affairs are now at a Crisis, & sentence may be passed upon them for aught we know in a very few days—to our establishment or destruction. Let the Army you have break & disperse & depend upon it Independancy will be a term of Mockery for an



age to come. I won't say measures have been taken to disband that Army, but if that event had been in view better measures than those we have pursued could scarcely have been devised. Confine not your attention to a small Circle; look round & through your Army—but I have not time to say more—when shall we meet?

I send you a Copy of our Articles for confederation. I know you will Criticise as a Scholar & a Legislator & I shall be glad to receive your Ideas.

The dispatch of 3 Copies of these accompanied by proper Addresses & Letters to each State has engaged me so very deeply for 2 or 3 days past, as spoken of above. Without these Extra jobbs my hands & my mind are for their strength generally sufficiently employed.

I am now to thank you for your Intelligence under the 26th. The Marquis's first fruits from Command will be encouraging to his confidence in our Men, I rejoice at his success & if he is returned to Camp I beg you will present my Congratulations.<sup>2</sup> I would if it were possible write by this opportunity, I trust his indulgence to Credit me to the next.

Several Members of Congress who have called here this Morning to read General Washington's Letter of the 26th have expressed their wishes that the Marquis may be appointed to the Command of a division. Therefore I have no doubt when the Letter is Read & the subject considered tomorrow in Congress I shall be charged with a Resolve equal to the Marquis's wishes.<sup>3</sup> I cannot learn from all you have written nor from any Account the number of our little [fleet] that escaped—what Naval Strength if any we now keep in Delaware—and how they are or are not exposed to the Enemy's power. If you can tell me these things do—but I will endeavor to get information from the Navy Board at Bordentown.

I send by this bearer a hunting Shirt & a Check'd Shirt for Berry & hope this Week to get a Warm Jacket & Breeches for the poor old fellow but these are articles beyond conception dear, however the price shall be no Bar to my intentions.

Mrs. Hartley is just returned home. A new scene opens, my power & possessions will be reduced to former Limits rather scanty for a President however ample for Mr L. I was put in the Chair the day the Lady left home. I shall be a little puzzled either to get a better or to make this place as convenient as a place for my vocation ought to be.

My Dear son, I pray God protect you.

H L

RC (MHi: William Gilmore Simms Collection deposit, 1973).

<sup>1</sup> On November 27 Laurens had written a now badly damaged letter to John in which he discussed the defense of the Delaware, Washington's prospective withdrawal to winter quarters, the Continental Army's supply problems, and the Saratoga Convention. Simms Collection deposit, MHi.

<sup>2</sup> Lafayette had distinguished himself during a skirmish with a party of Lord



Cornwallis' troops at Gloucester, N.J., on November 25. Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:156-58.

<sup>3</sup> Washington advised Laurens in a November 26-27 letter that if Congress did not give Lafayette a separate command the marquis might return to France "in disgust." Accordingly, Congress resolved on December 1 that Lafayette "be appointed to the command of a division in the continental army," and on December 4 Washington made him commander of the division recently commanded by Gen. Adam Stephen of Virginia. See *JCC*, 9:982-83; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:109-10, 138.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York 30th November 77

On the 26th Curr. by the Messenger Barry I paid my respects to your Excellency & conveyed Such Orders as I had then received from Congress. Pretty late last Night Jones brought in your Excellency's favors of the 26th & 27th which Shall be presented to Morrow, in the mean time I dispatch Francis Seall with the undermentioned Resolves of Congress, a packet containing one hundred Commissions, two Copies of articles proposed to the States for Confederation & Taxation, Copy of a Letter by Major General Gates to Congress dated 16th.

of the 27th on the appointment of three additional Members to the Board of War & Major General Gates President.

of the 28th appointing a Committee of three Members of Congress to confer with your Excellency for enquiries into the Causes of Losses & failures & for divers other matters.

of the 29th Submitting to your Excellency the regulating Rank in the Causes of Majr General Arnold, Brigadiers Woodford & Scott referring to a Subjoined Resolve of the 12th.

29th Ordering Copy of Majr. Gates's Letter to be transmitted.

I take the liberty of Sending a packet directed for Govr. Livingston which I request your Excellency will order to be forwarded by the earliest opportunity. I remain with very great regard.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

## Robert Morris to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

Manheim, Nov'r 30th, 1777.

Being desirous of rendering the public every service in my power, I have continued my attendance on Congress, & the Committees of Congress, at York, untill yesterday (notwithstanding my leave of absence), & on Friday I was appointed on a Committee with orders to repair immediately to General Washington on business of Importance. I am thus far in my way, & shall depart in the morning for

Camp, where I shall be glad to execute any of your commands. This expedition puts it out of my power to wait on the Council as I intended, in hopes of obtaining John Brown's discharge from close Confinement, for as I firmly believe him innocent in *his Intentions*, I cannot feel myself easy whilst he is confined in Goal. I beg leave, therefore, again to solicit your Excellency & the Honorable Council, to suffer him to depart from Goal on parole, & I here pledge myself for his faithfull observance of any engagements he enters into, or of such injunctions as the Council may think proper to lay him under.<sup>1</sup>

As a Prisoner, he is intitled to great lenity, because he has been bountifull & attentive to the sufferings of our prisoners, whilst he was in Philada; this I had from himself & others, & enclosed, I beg leave to hand you Genl Washington's unsolicited testimony thereof, in an abstract of his letter to Congress, dated 23d Inst.<sup>2</sup> I call it unsolicited, because I declare to you Sir, that I never wrote a line to Genl Washington or any other person on this subject, nor do I know of any other person that did, but I judge the information has been given the Genl by some of the Prisoners that shared the benefits arising from a subscription which Mr. Brown & some few others procured and distributed in the New Goal.

My connections in business with Mr. Brown are well known; he was many years a faithfull servant in my employ, & is justly entitled to my Friendship. I hope, therefore, to stand excused by your Excellency & the Council for thus troubling you with my applications on his behalf, & if you will suffer Mr. Brown to come out on his parole & assign this place (with the liberty of one or two miles for exercise) for his abode untill your further pleasure; it is a retired part of the country, he can live at little expence, & I am certain his conduct & conversation will be such as cannot produce any evil consequences to the public; you will oblige me by laying this & Genl Washington's letter before the Council, & they by a compliance with my request, will lay a lasting obligation on their & your Excellency's, obedt hble servt,

Rob't Morris

MS not found; reprinted from *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:45.

<sup>1</sup> See Henry Laurens to George Washington, November 19, 1777, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:98-99.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris

(In Committee on Foreign Affairs)

Gentlemen (Copy) York in Pensylvania Decr. 1st. 1777.

As we wish the subject of this letter to be well attended to & understood, we shall confine ourselves intirely to the business of such

French Gentlemen as have returned without getting employment in North America and particularly those of Monsr. du Coudray's Corps.

Whatever may be the Clamour excited by discontent, we think that a candid consideration of our circumstances, and what Congress have really done will fully justify them in the eyes of reasonable men. We will observe in the first place, that, of all those who have returned, not one came here at the request of Congress, that they have cost the states a very large sum of money, and, that the circumstances of affairs would not permit any benefit to be drawn from them here.

It was necessary, previous to the opening of the campaign that the affairs of the army should be arranged, officers appointed and every thing systematically made ready for the serious business that was approaching. At this time, it was not known by Congress or the Commander in chief, that such a character as Monsr. du Coudray (under such agreements as he brought with him) was to visit us. The best that could be done was therefore undertaken, and Genl. Knox, the father of the American Artillery, was appointed to that Command, and all the other divisions of the army filled with Major Generals.

In this state of things arrived Genl. du Coudray with an agreement by which he was to command the Artillery & the greater part of the major Generals of the army, by being of older commission. A plentiful crop of resignations began presently to sprout up; and the whole army must have been deranged & thrown into confusion just at the opening of a Campaign, or this agreement not accorded to in the whole. But Monsr. du Coudray would have every thing or nothing. An inflexible ambition, that paid no regard to the situation and circumstances of the army would be gratified. This produced a scene of contention wch. was not ended, when the unfortunate General was drowned by accident in the Schuylkill going to join the army. Immediately on his death the rest of his Corps determined to return to France; and in this disposition of mind Congress endeavoured to render things agreeable to them as possible, having some regard to the interest of the public which they serve.<sup>1</sup>

It is true that a concurrence of causes, such as removal from Philadelphia, the time that elapsed before business was regularly gone into again, and the multiplicity of public affairs &c did occasion some delay in settling with these Gentlemen, but this was loss to the community more than to them, because their pay was continued to the last; And you will see, by the papers inclosed, that ample allowances have been made for their expences to the shipping port for passage to France & travel to Paris.<sup>2</sup> It has been already observed that Monsr. Du Coudray's desire could not be complied with, without producing very injurious consequences. All the other Officers were offered admittance into the army according to the ranks stipulated

for with Mr. Deane; but, to avoid certain murmurs & discontent by difference of pay in the same army, they were offered the pay & rations of continental Officers of similar Rank. This they rejected; and when the mischief of dissimilar pay was removed by their determination to return to France, they were paid their Livres compleat, with all their Gratifications as agreed for, their expenses & passages being also fully satisfied.

Upon the whole, we beg leave to refer you to the inclosed papers for more minute information touching this business, where we think you will find documents sufficient to convince unprejudiced & reasonable men that Congress have done all they could or ought in duty to the publick to have done, for the entire satisfaction of these Gentlemen. And we hope you will be enabled thereby to counter-operate any ill impressions that may be attempted to be made by some of these Officers. We say some because we believe that the more reasonable among them are satisfied.

We are with much Regard, Gentlemen, Your very humble Servants.

Richd. Henry Lee

James Lovell

RC (PPAmP). In a clerical hand. Endorsed by John Adams: "Letter from Comtee of foreign affairs relative to returning French Officers."

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the difficulties generated by the arrival of Phillipe Du Coudray in America, see John Adams to Nathanael Greene, July 7, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The committee probably enclosed the account adopted by Congress on November 7. See JCC, 9:876-78.

## Edward Langworthy to William O'Bryen

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>

York Town, December 1st. 1777.

I have embraced the first Opportunity by Mr Hornby to let you know the present Situation of Congress. The Approach of Genl Howe towards Philadelphia obliged them to adjourn to this most disagreeable Town, where every thing is excessive dear & scarce any accommodation to be procured.

Since my arrival here,<sup>2</sup> I have not been able to get private Lodgings, so that I am at present quite irregular as to the mode of living, which makes me very uneasy.

With respect to the remittance you desired me to make to your Son in England, I have not as yet had it in my Power to fulfill your desires. The Capture of Philadelphia has prevented Mr Morris from attending Congress, with whom I proposed to negotiate this business; but a Circumstance occurred last week, which I apprehend will enable me to do it with great ease.



Mr John Adams, who is now at Boston, was appointed one of our Commissioners at Paris, & is immediately to proceed there. I am told he will wait on Congress for his Instructions before his departure, if this should be the Case, I shall immediately do this business for you. If not, the first time Mr Morris attends here, I shall communicate the matter to him &c.

By Letters from our Agents abroad, there is great reason to expect a French War in the [Spring]. The Congress at present is very thin of Members, however I hope during this Winter they will make a spirited Exertion for the Salvation of the Continent. You may expect to hear some thing soon from Washington. Do write me every Opportunity. Respectful compliments to Mrs OBrien, & believe me, Your sincere Friend & very humble servant,

Edward Langworthy

RC (PHi). Addressed: "To William O'Brien Esqr. at Savannah, in Georgia."

<sup>1</sup> The recipient of this letter was probably William O'Bryen, who was treasurer of Georgia in 1778 and a nonattending delegate to Congress in 1789. *Bio. Dir. Cong.*

<sup>2</sup> Langworthy and his colleague Joseph Wood first attended Congress on November 17. *JCC*, 9:931.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir,

York Town 1st December 1777.

I had the honour of writing to you the 20th & 29th Ult. by the Messenger Adam Cookas, the former notified your appointment to be President of the Board of War by the unanimous Voice of Congress & requested your attendance as early as you could give it with convenience. This I repeat in order to guard against delay or miscarriage of the Letter refered to.

Congress having learned that an application is intended by Gen Howe or Gen Burgoyne for leave to embark the Troops which were surrendered to you by the Convention of Saratoga, at Rhode Island or some part of the Sound have directed me to acquaint you, that the embarkation must be made at the port stipulated in the Convention & no other.<sup>1</sup>

The Resolve of Congress to this effect will be found inclosed in this, I beg leave to refer to it, and having received no other Commands, I conclude repeating that I am with very great Esteem, sir, Your obedient & most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (NH*i*).

<sup>1</sup> In a November 26-27 letter to Laurens that Congress read this day, Washington revealed that General Howe wanted to change the embarkation point

for General Burgoyne's troops from Boston to Rhode Island or some place on Long Island Sound and warned that this would enable these men to reach England sooner and be replaced in America by other British units. Congress, sharing Washington's apprehension, therefore decided that in accordance with the terms of the Saratoga Convention Burgoyne's army could only embark from Boston. *JCC*, 9:982; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:110-11. Laurens also enclosed copies of Congress' resolve on this issue with brief letters he wrote this day to Gen. William Heath, the American commander in Boston, and to the speaker of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. *PCC*, item 13, fols. 50-51; and *Revolutionary Letters*, M-Ar.

## Henry Laurens to John Rutledge

Dear Sir,

York 1st December 1777.

I had the honour of addressing Your Excellency in an official Letter under the 28th past which lies before me Sealed in a packet with Confederation &c. These are to be conveyed by Capt Gillon to which I shall add three packets each containing five Copies of Articles of Confederation directed Severally for the General Assembly & the two Councils of South Carolina. Twelve Copies more I have directed to Colo. Gervais to be distributed among Gentlemen whose names are written on each—particularly one to Mr. Wells. If your Excellency should be of opinion that these papers, before they are taken under consideration by the Legislative powers ought to be made as public as I wish, you will encourage him to print 2 or 3 hundred Copies & to add Copies of the Addresses on Confederation & Taxation. I will not presume to comment on the Model which is now Submitted to the Wisdom of thirteen United States & intended to pass a revision under the Same abilities collected.

I beg leave however to remark to my late Colleagues, that Congress before printing judged it proper to make Several essential alterations particularly in Article 9th parag. 2d, that I have therefore no cause to blush at the appearance of my name among the *few Nays* on the Original Vote, I should be Still better pleased to see that article undergo a little further amendment.<sup>1</sup>

*That*, for taking Yeas & Nay's is another Item to which I am marked in the Journal with a disgraceful No! & almost without a Companion.<sup>2</sup> I have never heard that question *demand*ed, with that Calmness of mind which ought ever to accompany the debates of Senators, it has always been the product of heat & menace. Besides, however proper it might be to incorporate in the Rules of a House, it does not Strike me as a necessary ingredient for Confederation. It appears to be totally Irrelative to the grand Subject. I do not mean to comment by exposing this baggatelle. There are Articles of deeper Impression.

I have taken the Liberty to commit four packets directed for

Georgia to Your Excellency's protection, which I request may be immediately Sent forward by an express Messenger, the expence to be Continental. Captain Gillon's politeness in taking charge of all these bundles, will Save not only Money but time. He will travel more expeditiously at this Season of the year than I could expect any of our Common Expresses would do.

The loss of Delaware may be contrasted by the evacuation of Ticonderoga & Mount Independence—our lucky Capture of the Syren Frigate, a Transport Ship & Armed Sloop.

I wish I could mark an equivalent for the destruction of our little fleet in that River. Nothing occurs to me, but the honour acquired by the brave & gallant defence for upwards of a Month against the combined powers of the British Navy & Army & the heavy losses which attended each in their attacks—a 64 Gun Ship & a Frigate burnt, two other Capital Ships exceedingly battered & the whole fleet in Relation compelled to retreat more than once—the loss in the Army by a modest computation not less than 1000. And when 'tis considered that with respect to the expectation of Congress & other people, this defence which when truly told will amaze Europe, was mere chance, medley, Lustre will be added to the Glory of Lieutent. Colo. Smith, Lt. Colo. Greene & Commodore Hazelwood, nor ought the alloy of Censure to be mixed from Supposed mistakes which the latter unsupported as he was might have made in his Retreat.

Our Army under General Washington are half in Rags & half of them without Blankets, have remained too long inactive & now discover Signs of moving to Winter Quarters, on the other hand the Enemy have manifested their fears, by fortifying themselves Strongly, & burning a great number of adjacent Houses in which their apprehensions had dictated we might make Lodgements.

Inclosed your Excellency will find a schedule of part of this mischief. We know likewise that their Troops are badly Clothed & worse fed, that they are discon[ten]ted & often mutinous & we hope that reinforcements of Clothing & Men will enable us soon to drive them into their Ships, & that these in January may be too Strongly fortified to get out of our reach. The disaffected who remained in the City & welcomed the Enemy have Suffered amazingly for want of food; to keep life several thousands have come out relying upon the Mercy of our General & many more would gladly come forth if their evil consciences did not dictate danger of another kind.

Congress have appointed three important Committees who are all now in action—One to confer with General Washington confidentially on future operations & if possible to prevent taking Winter Quarters—One to consult with the State of Pennsylvania on the article of Provisions & other matters<sup>3</sup>—a third to translate Consideration into French & to Address the Canadians among whom we



know there is a Majority dissatisfied with English Government.<sup>4</sup> Our Indian Committee have prepared a proper Talk for the Six Nations & at length I have put in motion the Creek Eagle, Tail & Rattle Trap. Commissioners are appointed for inquiring into the State of affairs at Fort Pitt & the Western Frontier & for directing a force to quell those Indians who, at Detroit, have been instigated to Murder many of the back Inhabitants & if practicable to reduce that nest of Mischief.

Major General Gates is appointed by Congress president of the New board of War & to act occasionally in the Field—his associates at the Board, General Mifflin, Colo Pickering, Colo. Jo. Trumbull & Mr. R. Peters, Salary 2500 Dollars per annum.<sup>5</sup> We have great expectations from this Institution. A new appointment for Commerce I hope will soon take place. Owing to ill Luck or some what else the *old* has produced little more than an Expence most amazing & a ragged Army. Twice within three years Sir, I have been haunted by the Spirit “four words.” Your Excellency is not unacquainted with the Era of her first appearance in the horrible figure of “Rice to Europe excepted.”<sup>6</sup> In this Character however terrible to Some people I encountered her with great Jocularity she has now assumed a more diabolical motto—“He to be accountable” although these compound the most farcical unmeaning phrase in the World. Pleasing & comfortable indeed to some people, the tables are turned, I honestly confess she maddens me every day & threatens to rob me of half of Mount Tacitus.<sup>7</sup> I have been Witness of her obtaining from a public Stock in which I am Interested 80,000 Dollars for a pretended Service in the gross & afterwards of picking our pockets in open day light, for the Same Services in detail Still marking under “He to be accountable.”

If not quite so gross as here represented, Something very like it & many Instances worse, very alarming & very Shocking.

I have never yet been Witness of one Instance of realizing those cursed Words. Our Treasury was lately exhausted, New Emissions were made instantly, & for aught I know are making. The demands upon us which at this moment conspire & which are in daily growth are Mountainous, but we must be Satisfied; happy indeed are we, that any quantity of brown paper will answer the calls of our necessities, alarming as this appears we must for the present Submit. Further necessity may, must, in a few Months perform a work which Wisdom ought to have effected Many Months ago.

These things Your Excellency ought to know. I do not hold it necessary to disclose my Sentiments to every body.

This Morning is to come under consideration the Quota of General Officers for each State, I mean to move the appointment of two Brigadiers for South Carolina.<sup>8</sup> I shall most candidly represent the two worthy Men who if I mistake not are the proper Candidates,



if Congress Shall judge it necessary to give us only one, Seniority will probably have preference.

Mr. Deane by a Vote is recalled from the Court of France, Mr. John Adams elected to Succeed him.

Gentlemen here in whom I place the most confidence encourage me to hope that we shall infallibly be in possession of New York or Philadelphia or both before the expiration of January. The former is preferred by some from a prospect of valuable acquisitions of Merchandize. When I consider these may be removed, that the place cannot be held while the Enemy is triumphant in a Navy, and that we have lately received the Strongest confirmation of the great Franklin's opinion that Delaware may be rendered inaccessible & Philadelphia too, if admitting we have a Sufficient army, I am of other Sentiments, agreeing however with those who choose both.

Had Some folks who love to hear themselves talk, acted the part of good Guardians the whole British Fleet would have been Set at defiance & General Howe must have Stolen a disgraceful March out of Philadelphia before this day or have shared the fate of the Northern Hero. 'Tis probable both Lord & General has been taught to believe a passage might be obtained with less than an hundredth part of the difficulty & Loss which they have already experienced, otherwise the General would have proceeded by Steps more cautious than those he was treading from July to September.

General Gates informs Congress few Ships he beleived will be wanted for transporting the fragment of Genl. Burgoyne's Army—on the March towards Boston a Majority of the Foreign Troops & many of the British had deserted. We have Since been told of a Mutiny by the British in which their Escort had been obliged to reduce them by Musketry but we have received no particulars. I send by this conveyance Some papers of Intelligence to Mr. Gervais which he will if your Excellency pleases communicate.

Permit me Sir towards the Close of this long Letter to request most earnestly of your Excellency to apply for leave that I may return to Carolina in February or March or sooner if a Representation shall have arrived in Congress. I humbly think I have a right to demand a respite & therefore I canot feel the least disposition to Sue.

My successors should be told that Candles are abt 5/ per pound, Shoes 50/ a pair & dollars still at 7/6, these are heavy but are very small considerations in comparison with my true motives for desiring to return home. I am with very great respect &ca

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> The section of Article 9 referred to by Laurens dealt with Congress' appellate jurisdiction "in all disputes and differences now subsisting, or that hereafter may arise between two or more states concerning boundary, jurisdiction or any other cause whatever." *JCC*, 9:916–18. His October 25 vote against the successful motion to amend this section of Article 14, which became Article 9, is recorded in *JCC*, 9:843.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Lightfoot Lee and Henry Marchant were the only delegates to join Laurens on October 30 in opposing the section of the Articles that required the recording of votes in the journals "when it is desired by any delegate." *JCC*, 9:850, 923.

<sup>3</sup> After this committee conferred with a committee of the Pennsylvania Assembly on December 2, the assembly passed several resolves on December 6 to enable Washington and the Pennsylvania Council "to procure great supplies of provisions and other necessaries." *JCC*, 9:976-77, 1010; and *Pa. Assembly Minutes* (1778), pp. 14-17.

<sup>4</sup> On December 2 this committee submitted a report, which Congress read but postponed action on, calling for the construction of "a strong Citadel" on Lake Champlain and the creation of a Canadian regiment. *JCC*, 9:985-88.

<sup>5</sup> Congress in fact allotted each member of the newly reconstituted board of war a salary of \$2,000 a year. *JCC*, 9:820.

<sup>6</sup> A reference to the exemption of rice from the nonexportation clause of the association signed by Congress on October 20, 1774. *JCC*, 1:77.

<sup>7</sup> One of Laurens' South Carolina plantations.

<sup>8</sup> There is no indication in the journals that Congress considered this issue on December 1.

## Henry Laurens to Charles Stewart

Sir,

York 1st December 1777.

Inclosed you will receive a Resolve of Congress enjoining you to preserve the Barrels when emptied of flour in the Army & to Send them by return Waggons to Mill to be refilled—to Save also the empty Beef & pork Barrels & as much as possible of the remains of Salt for public use & to employ a proper number of Coopers for these purposes.<sup>1</sup> You will be pleased to give me at proper times accounts of your proceedings in consequence of this order. I am with great regard &ca.

P.S. In his absence Thos. Jones Esqr. Dep. Commissary General of Issues.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Charles Stewart Esquire, Commissary General, White Marsh."

<sup>1</sup> This resolve had been passed on November 28. *JCC*, 9:977-78.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir

York 1st December 77.

I had the honour of writing to your Excellency yesterday by Thos. Seale. This Morning I reported to Congress your Excellency's Letter of the 26th, 27th November together with the Copy of General Sr. William Howe's, which came inclosed in it. I am now charged to inform General Gates, the Council of Massachusetts Bay & General Heath, that it is the Resolution of Congress, the Troops of Lt. Gen-

eral Burgoyne which were Surrendred in terms of the Convention of Saratoga Should be embarked at the port Stipulated by that agreement & at no other.

I am also ordered to Signify to your Excellency it is highly agreeable to Congress that the Marquis de Lafayette be appointed to the Command of a division in the American Army.<sup>1</sup> Your Excellency will find a minute from the Journal of Congress on these points here inclosed. I hasten this forward in order to transmit at the Same time the following intelligence deliverd to me by the Board of War. This I am persuaded will afford your Excellency a particular degree of pleasure & the account may have some good influence in the approaching conference between your Excellency & the Committee deputed by Congress.

Extract of a Letter from Wm. Finnie D.Q.M.G. at Williamsburg 22d November 1777.

"I wrote you yesterday by Post inclosing a General return of the Continental Stores in this State. I also mentioned the Report of the arrival of the Congress Sloop with a valuable Cargo of Blankets, Cloth & other necessities for the Army from France, which News was confirmed last Night. Such of these articles as are intended for Head Quarters I shall dispatch as soon as possible."

God forbid any disappointment between the Cup & the Lip.

I have the honour to be with the utmost respect &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 9:982-83; and Laurens to John Laurens, November 30, 1777, note 3.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

Decr. 1st. [1777]

As I was at the Secretaries yesterday I took off a few Resolutions from the Journals for your view, supposing as to the above, that you might have forgotten them, and as to the following, wishing to have your Sentiments.<sup>1</sup> I doubt not you will think it may or may not be proper to take from the minds of foreign Courts the Idea that we are absolutely determined about our conduct towards Gr. Br. in regard to Treaties; therefore the Guard which you see in the Resolves about the *time* of communicating the different Resolves, which the Commissioners *only* ought to determine.

Being one of the Committee with F L Lee & Duer to conduct the Resolve of Novr. 29th respecting Canada,<sup>2</sup> I wish yr. Sentiments, promising to you that I am altogether averse from strong solicitations to that People to become immediately active. They will fall to us of Course. I wish to have them acquainted wth. the nature of our union. But I would not wish to be bound to carry an Expedition into their Country till their Friendship was certain and quite



General: But I stand ready for conviction upon hearing Arguments for it founded in evident Policy.

It could not be brought about that a Commission [. . .] be sent you by this Post, which perhaps you may be led to expect by Letters delivered to the Express two days ago: But a second messenger will be sent with it and all the proper papers. Genl. Howe will not exchange prisoners till those murdered at New York are paid for with fresh & good Soldiers. He is ready to exchange Officers to be on parole. He wants Burgoyne's Embarkation to be from Rh. Island: but Genl. Washington thinks a whole Season would be gained to the Enemy by that; and wishes a refusal. It will be hard for Massachusetts to have so many additional mouths to feed, but there are good Arguments for denying Howe's Proposition.<sup>3</sup>

Dear Sir,

Decr. 1st. 10 o'Clock a.m.

We have nothing of much Importance this morning. Fayette being with Genl. Greene in the Jerseys fell upon a Pickett of the Enemy, killed 20, took 20 & wounded many without loss. He is delighted with the Militia; and Genl. Greene says the Marquis seems determined to court Danger. I wish more were so determined. Some of the Enemy's Ships have passed up to the City.

We yet hear Nothing from Spencer; but we resolved on the 28th that Enquiry should be made into the Causes of the Evacuation of Fort Mercer and the Conduct of the principal officers commanding there, also an immediate Enquiry into the Causes of the Failure at Rh. Island and Conduct of the principal officers commanding there, also into the loss of Forts Montgomery & Clinton & Fort Mifflin on the Delaware, and into all losses in future Forts, posts & Shipping.<sup>4</sup>

These Resolves will be printed at large. I give you only the Skeleton, for any use within yr. discretion.

I am dear Sir, your most humb Servt.

James Lovell

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> "The above" resolutions, which Lovell copied at the top of the page before beginning this letter to Adams, were those of September 28, 1776, pertaining to the "style and manner at the court of France" the commissioners to Paris were expected to maintain. "The following" November 22, 1777, resolutions, which he copied at the top of the next sheet before continuing the letter at "10 o'Clock a.m." this day, consisted of a congressional denial that the United States had or would enter into negotiations with Great Britain "inconsistent with the independence of the said states." See *JCC*, 5:833-34, 9:951-52.

<sup>2</sup> Lovell was a member of the committee directed to prepare "an address to the inhabitants of Canada inviting them to accede to the union of these states" and to procure a translation of the Articles of Confederation. The committee's lengthy report was read in Congress on December 2, but action on it was postponed. *JCC*, 9:981, 985-88.

<sup>3</sup> On the refusal of Congress to allow the Convention Army to embark from Rhode Island, see Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates, this date. For the November 22 resolutions Lovell copied following this paragraph before resuming his writing at 10:00 a.m., see note 1 above.

<sup>4</sup> For the November 28 resolves calling for these inquiries, see *JCC*, 9:975-76.



## John Penn to Theodorick Bland

Dear Sir <sup>1</sup>Novr. 31 [*i.e.* December 1] 1777 <sup>2</sup>

The reason of my inclosing the Resolves of Congress relative to you was that on Colo. Shelburn's application for a Colo. Commission, he having only had a Lt. Colo., General Washington was directed by Congress to enquire into and settle the Rank of all the officers in the service of the Cavelry. However soon after Mr. Thompson made out proper copies from the Journal containing all the Resolutions relating to the different Colos. and sent them to the General.<sup>3</sup>

I recd your letter for Mrs. Bland and inclosed it to her; Informing her that I should take pleasure in conveying any that she might instrust to my care to you. The enemy have evacuated Ticonderoga & all their other Posts this side the lakes. Could you but be able to form a Junction between Generals Howe & Burgoyne with their armies I think the war would be at an end.

We have every reason to expect there will soon be a war between France & England, the French Ambassador has had directions to demand all the Ships & their Cargoes that have been taken by the English, cleared out for any French Ports & unless their requisition is Complied with he is to leave the Court.

The General at Martinique is directed to prepare for war as fast as possible, and to lay an embargo on all the Ships there, untill a Convoy can be sent for such as are intended for Europe. I am with great Respect, Dear Sir, Your obt. Servt. J. Penn

RC (PPRF). Addressed: "Thomas [Theodorick] Bland Esqr., Colo. of a Regimt. of light Horse, near Head Quarters."

<sup>1</sup> Theodorick Bland (1742-90), a Virginia physician and planter who was currently colonel of the First Continental Dragoons, served as a delegate to Congress from 1780 to 1783. *DAB*; and *Bio. Dir. Cong.*

<sup>2</sup> As Penn apparently wrote this letter the day after November 30, he should have dated it December 1.

<sup>3</sup> For further references to Bland's dispute about rank with Col. Elisha Sheldon, not "Shelburn," see Henry Laurens to Washington, November 7, 1777, note 2.

Committee for Foreign Affairs to the  
Commissioners at Paris

(Copy) (In Committee for foreign Affairs)  
Honourable Gentlemen York Town Pennsylvania Decr. 2d 1777.

Since ours of Octr. 31st, the enemy have by repeated efforts at last overcome our defences on the Delaware below Philadelphia, and we hear they have got up some vessels to the city; but we incline to

think they will be interrupted much in their operations on the river by the Cheveaux de Frize and the cold weather. We are just informed by Genl. Gates that the Garrison of Tyconderoga & Mount Independance have destroyed the works & the buildings, and have precipitately retreated across Lake Champlain to Isle aux Noix & St. Johns, taking with them only the Brass Artillery, Powder & Provisions. The heavy stores they threw into the Lake. If the Campaign should close at this Period (and if it does it will be intirely owing to want of Cloaths & Blankets, both of which we are in great distress for, having received very few) the enemy have little to boast of. They began it with two armies, one of which has been repeatedly beaten and at length compelled to lay down its arms and surrender on terms. The other, after various chances, in which fortune more than any thing else has been its protector, hath at length possessed itself of Philadelphia. We say Fortune has protected the army of Genl. Howe, and we have good reason for saying so, when the fact is, that, at Germantown the enemy were actually defeated, and accident alone prevented a total & irreperable overthrow. It would have been otherwise had our young troops possessed that calmness of discipline & selfrecollection which is habitual to veteran armies. The acquisition of Philada, which Mr. Howe holds at present by a very precarious tenure, cannot have cost him, in the whole, fewer than 4000 men, since he landed at the head of Elk, and we know that they have lost two ships of war before Fort Mifflin, the one a 64 Gun ship the other a Frigate. Genl. Washington's army, about 18000 is now 14 miles from Philadelphia; and the enemy have fortified themselves in the best manner they can in & near the city by double lines from Delaware to Schuylkill across the common.

The Manoeuvres near New York exhibit Proofs of apprehension for the safety of that place, because they have evacuated and destroyed their post at Fort Independance above Kings bridge, and have drawn in all their out posts, to concenter their strength & secure, if they can, their hold of N. York. We hope before the opening of next Campaign to put Hudson's River into a state inaccessible to the enemies Ships of war, and thereby to render their enterprizes on that quarter extremely difficult & dangerous.

We have now Gentlemen, given you an exact account of our military situation. With respect to our civil state, we would acquaint you that Congress have passed the Confederation and sent it to the different states, with strong recommendations to give it speedy consideration and return. Extensive taxation is also recommended & seems to be universally adopting. You will readily imagine Gentlemen, that our extensive operations have produced great expence, as our inexperience in war has not furnished us with that wise systematic Economy which is so necessary, and so well understood by European nations.

We shall have emitted 38 millions of Dollars by the close of this year exclusive of provincial currency. The quantity is too great and of course the quality is injured. The slow operation of taxes will not afford adequate remedy; and the offer of sterling interest does not fill the Loan offices so quick as the necessary expences call for supply.

If a Loan of two Millions sterling could be obtained, the high exchange would enable Congress, by drawing on that fund, to call so large a quantity of paper presently out of circulation as to appretiate the rest, and give time for taxation to work a radical cure. Without this remedy of the evil very pernicious consequences may follow e'er long. Our situation is rendered still worse by the impossibility of vending such products as America has largely in store and which are now greatly wanted in Europe as Tobacco, Naval Stores, Rice, Indigo &c.

The great Superiority of the Enemies Fleet renders it impossible to send these products in any quantity to sea with a tollerable prospect of safety. Thus we are prevented from sending you the 4000 Hhds. of Tobacco which you have contracted for, and which Congress have directed to be sent, although several thousands have for some time past been purchased up for payment of our debts in France. The good Intentions of our friends in that country are almost intirely frustrated by the exertion of the whole power of the enemy by Sea to prevent us from sending to or receiving from Europe any thing whatever. A War in Europe would greatly & immediately change the scene. The maritime force of France & Spain with the N. American cruisers would quickly lessen the commerce of Gr. Britain in the western ocean, and make way for the reciprical benefits of commerce betwixt us & our friends.

We have not been favoured with a line from you since the 25th of May which we lament exceedingly, but of which we cannot complain, since we doubt not but you have written, though we have not been so fortunate as to receive your letters.

We had reason from your promise to expect a monthly packet; and this expectation prevented us from looking out so early as we should have done for a vessel or two from hence. We have heard with pleasure by means of Mr. Carmichael, through Mr. Bingham that Mr. Lee had successfully accomplished his business at the court of Prussia.<sup>1</sup> We remember you informed us that the objects which carried him to Berlin were, besides procuring that princes acknowledgement of our Independance, the obtaining open ports for our commerce, and liberty to sell our prizes therein. We hope the interference of that powerful prince will effectually prevent Russian & German auxiliaries from being sent here by Great Britain.

As the marine Committee have already sent some and will order more of the continental vessels of war to France under your direction, permit us to suggest an expedition which appears likely to bene-



fit us & distress the enemy. We are informed that 2 or 3 well manned Frigates dispatched early in February so as to arrive at the Island of Mauritius in June (being provided with letters of credence for such refreshments & aid of Stores &c. as may be necessary from the Minister to the French Governor of that Island) may go from thence to cruise on the coast of Coromandel 20 days sail from the Island of Mauritius, where they will be in the way to intercept the China ships, besides distressing the internal Trade of India. The prizes may be sold at Mauritius and Bills of Exchange remitted to you at Paris. We would observe that in passing to Mauritius our Ships had better call at Gorce that at the Cape, to avoid allarming the vigilance & apprehensions of the British Cruisers.

Another beneficial attempt may be conducted along the coast of Africa. The French and Dutch settlements & perhaps the Portugaize will purchase the prizes and give bills on Europe. We think your plan of getting one of the new constructed Ships of war equal to one of 64 Guns built for the use of these states in Europe is a very good one; and it may be employed to very beneficial purposes. The heavy iron Cannon which you propose to send will be very wellcome for Fortifications & for Vessels, and they cost abundantly more, here, than you can furnish them for from Europe; besides there is a delay in getting them which frequently distresses us greatly. And surely your determination to supply us with materials wanted here for Ship-building is very wise, since it is by marine force that the most destructive wound may be given to our Enemies. We are directed to point out proper ports into which the stores mention'd in the Resolve of Congress of Novr. 10th may be imported.<sup>2</sup> We are obliged to own that the port of Charlestown in Sth. Carolina & those eastward of Rh. Island are the only safe ones. We wish the number of Manufacturers in Lead & Sulphur had been limited in that same resolve, but we place full confidence in your discretion.

We shall be glad to receive from you by the first opportunity a plan of the militia of Switzerland. You will be pleased to attend to the several matters contained in our former letters, copies of which do not happen to be at hand.

We are with much Esteem, Gentlemen, Your Friends & huml. Servts.

Richd. Henry Lee

James Lovell

RC (PPAmP). In a clerical hand. Endorsed by John Adams: "Letter from the Comtee of foreign Affairs Decr. 2. 1777."

<sup>1</sup> For further information on the receipt of William Carmichael's letter, see James Lovell to John Adams, November 22, 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> On November 10 Congress had directed the Committee for Foreign Affairs to have the commissioners in France and Spain purchase "five hundred tons of lead, four hundred tons of powder, one million gun-flints, tents for fifty thousand men, and ten thousand yards of flannel for cartridges." JCC, 9:883.



## James Duane to George Clinton

Sir, York Toun, Pens. 2d Decem'r 1777.

Since I had the Honour of writing to you last week: Fort Mercer at Redbank has shard the Fate of Fort Mifflin. The attempts to relieve both were a day too late. Lord Cornwallis crossed the Delaware at Copper's Ferry at the Head of 2500 or 3000 men where he Joind a Detachment that had preceeded him and with a Train of artillery pushed forward to besiege the Fort. General Green was ordered to relieve the Fort but coming too late, it was evacuated. And our own People set fire to several of our Vessells of war which were employd in the Defence of the River. The way is now clear for the Introduction of the British Fleet, & our Gallies [are] in no small Danger. In the mean time, Green and Cornwallis are too near each other to part without Blows. Indeed a Report prevails that they have had an Engagement, that Cornwallis is taken Prisoner & his Division broken: but it wants confirmation.

Congress have agreed to a Confederacy & recommended it in strong Terms to the respective Legislatures. It pleases here after the most mature Investigation, & I am well persuaded that it is the only Plan that can be reconciled to the Majority of the States. This with other Important Resolutions for supporting our publick will be announced to your Excellency thro' the President.

I am not yet reliev'd by Mr. Morris or Mr. Lewis. The weather is severe already. With every wish for your Happiness, I have the Honour to be Sir Your Excellency's most Obed' hum'e Se't,

Jas. Duane.

[P.S.] Be pleased to forward the enclosd to G. Arnold.<sup>1</sup>

MS not found; reprinted from Clinton, *Papers* (Hastings), 2:559-60.

<sup>1</sup> Presumably Henry Laurens' November 29 letter to Arnold.

## James Duane to John Jay

Dear Sir York Town Pens. 2d Decr. 1777

I have had so much Publick Business on my hands that I have been unavoidably deprivd of paying that attention to my Friends which always gives me Pleasure. As one of the Number I have the Honour of considering yourself; & of you I have not been entirely unmindful. At the same time that I cannot boast of much Encouragement or any great merit.

To the Governor and Council of Safety I have communicated every Occurence of moment & doubt not from your publick station that you have had an Opportunity of Information.

Since my last publick dispatches the Confederacy & an address to the Legislatures & a system for supporting the publick Credit have rec'd the Sanction of Congress & are now forwarded to each State. The Confederacy I presume will please. If it is objected to I shall despair of the Happiness of this Country, notwithstanding the bright prospect of our affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Fort Mercer at Redbank soon followd the Example of Fort Mifflin having been evacuated on the approach of Lord Cornwallis, who meant to besiege instead of storming it and the troops sent to support the garrison, under Genl Green, coming up too late. In Consequence several of our Vessels of War were burnt by our own People to prevent their falling into the hands of the Enemy. General How will of Course be master of the Delaware and enable his Brother to bring up the British Fleets to the City. After all this Success they must feel their debility; having no Army to pursue those vast projects of Conquest which they contemplated. Burgoine's total defeat must work the ruin of their Affairs; as the whole strength of the united States will be now centerd in one Object, to wreck and defeat the designs of these ill fated brothers. What will be the plan of winter operations I cannot yet tell you. Our troops are ill clad & the weather is uncommonly severe for this climate. This day we have a deep snow. Whether they will be able to keep the Field and act offensively I cannot decide.

I have leave of absence at last, I shall set out as soon as Mr Morris or Mr Lewis arrives, after a painful service of more than eight months.

The enclosd Letter for you from Europe I have the pleasure of forwarding, and am with Compls to our friendly circle, Dr Sir, your affect & Obt sert,

Jas. Duane

RC (NNC).

<sup>1</sup> Duane commented at greater length on the Articles of Confederation in a letter he wrote to Jay from Livingston Manor in New York on December 23: "The last session of Congress has with respect to me, been a Campaign. I have had many difficulties to encounter from the particular views & Instructions of our own state: the progress and issue of which, in detail, will afford you some Amusement.

"The Confederacy is upon a liberal Plan, calculated to establish general Security and social Intercourse, among the States; & to extinguish all territorial disputes. There are only two points that can admit of much debate—The *Equality* of each State in Congress; and the Ratio, for assessing their respective Quotas of the publick charges. Both are copious Themes and have & will receive much Controversy. When I see you I shall explain the different Principles on which the latter point depends. Much may be said on either side. To regulate the comparative value of and ability of each State by one fixed and permanent Medium is exceedingly difficult. The Estimate of Landed property; & of the number of People were opposed to each other. To both these are strong Objections and perhaps all *visible Property* would have given a preferable Rule. With the Confederacy is a short address from Congress to each of the Legislatures, which fully explains the difficulties they encountered in

forming any system which could be reconciled to the prejudices, the policy & the Interest, of so many independent States. If it has it's weight the States will come to a conclusion to endeavour to obtain Improvements which they conceive important; but to consent to the present Plan rather than delay a Measure essential to their Safety." Jay, *Papers* (Morris), 1:458-59.

## James Duane to Robert R. Livingston

My Dear Sir

York Town 2d Decemr 1777

My publick Dispatches, which have been regular have communicated every Interesting Circumstance which has occurred in this capital Scene of the American War. I lament that it has not been attended with the same brilliant Success as the northern Campaign. Had that been the Case my dear Countrymen woud soon have experienced a happy Termination to all their distresses. The Delaware is now in the power of the Howes and I suppose their Fleets by this time may be safely moord in the Harbor of Philada.

Fort Mifflin made a noble Defence for seven weeks against the united Efforts of the British Fleet & Army. It was not relieved and sank under a Series of the most violent Attacks which were continued without Ceasing. Fort Mercer at Red Bank was evacuated on the approach of Lord Cornwallis with 3000 Men & a heavy train of artillery. It was incapable of resisting a Siege and General Green who was sent to it's Relief did not get up in Season. Several of our Ships were destroyed by our own people lest they shoud fall a Prey to the Enemy. It is impossible to form a Judgment of our further Operations this Winter. The Weather for some time past has been and continues most unfavourable to our Troops who are thinly clad—Many of them without Blankets. Our Northern Clime is a Paradise to this watry Country.

Green & Cornwallis must come to blows as they are too near to part but by common Consent; & the Spirit of Enmity is too high to Justify such an Expectation. They burn & destroy without mercy—more [. . .]<sup>1</sup>

Philadelphia is much distressed & Howe seizes everything as his own not sparing even space. The Inhabitants are become Whigs & groan for the appearance of Genl. Washington. They repent too late!

Congress have agreed upon the Confederation after a most tedious Examination of the Report of the Committee of the whole House. The Plan is new liberal and salutary & probably will meet with a pretty general Ratification. At least it seems to give great satisfaction in this Quarter. I enclose you a Copy. A System is recommended to support the publick Credit & reduce the price of Supplies for the army. It is forwarded to Our Legislature by this Express.

I learn the situation of your Family by a Letter from Mrs. Duane. I lament the misfortune of my Friends; but trust all will yet terminate happily. Our Enemies here have advantages, but their Force is not formidable, & affairs in Europe promise a Rupture between France, Spain & England.

Present my most affectionate Regards to the Circle of our common Friends, & particularly to Mrs Livingston Sen. & Jun., and believe me with unfeigned affection, Dear Sir, your most obdt hul sert.

Jas. Duane

P.S. Neither Morris or Lewis are arrived. It is very hard! I dare not desert my station, & yet my anxiety to see my Family & Friends is irrepressible!

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> Approximately 15 words nearly indecipherable. Duane interlined this entire sentence after writing the following paragraph, fitting it into a small space. The following conjectural reading suggests Duane's meaning: "They burn & destroy without mercy—more of the last near Phil. have shewed the fate of [. . .]—& our Entire Shoar."

## Marine Committee to the Eastern Navy Board

Gentlemen

Decemr. 2d 1777

It is the earnest desire of this Committee that you press forward the two Frigates at Rhode Island and get them to Sea if possible with all dispatch when they are to proceed to France agreeable to our former directions. We are exceedingly anxious to have this business accomplished and hope for your utmost exertion therein being, Gentlemen, Your very humble servants

P.S. Having been informed that the Syren frigate is cast a Shore on point Judith—that she is in our possession and that her Guns, Cables & Anchors, and some other parts of her Tackle and Apparel are like to be saved, we would have you purchase her Guns and Anchors and her Cables and all other Tackle and Apparl if you should think them fit for service, and remove them to some safe place in Massachusetts Bay to be applied to the use of the first frigate that may want them.

In order that you may not be in want of money to carry on the business of your Department we now enclose you two drafts on the Loan Offices of Massachusetts Bay and Rhode Island for fifty thousand Dollars which you will please to draw as you may want it.<sup>1</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> As president of the Marine Committee, Henry Laurens wrote the following note this day to John Langdon, the Continental prize agent in New Hampshire:



"We are favoured with yours of the 3d Ultimo and are now to inform you that the Navy Board at Boston are fully authorized and empowered to give directions and to make the necessary advances of money for the use of the Marine Service within the four Eastern states. Therefore, we refer you to them in All Cases which relates to the part of that business which is under your care." Capt. J.G.M. Stone Collection, Annapolis, Md.

## Marine Committee to James Nicholson

Sir

December 2d 1777

We find it necessary to give you the following Instructions which you will please to Observe. We desire that you will proceed with the frigate *Virginia* down the bay as low as you can with prudence place said frigate not to be exposed to Superior attack from the enemy and there wait for a fresh Northwest wind and other favourable circumstances to proceed to Sea upon the Voyage directed by your Instructions of the 23d of October last.<sup>1</sup> It is expected that you will provide a fast sailing Tender to preceede the frigate and give you notice of the Situation of the enemy their Numbers and force thereby to enable you to act in such manner as will be most likely to effect the business of your voyage properly. We expect the speedy execution of those Orders and wishing you Success remain Sir, Your hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup>For a discussion of Nicholson's abortive attempts to get to sea and the eventual capture of the *Virginia* off Cape Charles in April 1778, see William M. Fowler, Jr., "James Nicholson and the Continental Frigate *Virginia*," *American Neptune* 34 (April 1974): 135-41. See also the Marine Committee's letters to Nicholson of January 28 and March 4, 1778.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to John Adams

Dear Sir,

York in Pennsylvania December 3d. 1777

With great pleasure to ourselves we discharge our duty by inclosing to you your Commission for representing these United States at the Court of France.<sup>1</sup> We are by no means willing to indulge a thought of your declining this important service, and therefore we send duplicates of the Commission and the late Resolves, in order that you may take one sett with you, and send the other, by another Vessel. These are important papers, and therefore we wish they may be put into the hands of a particular and careful person with direction to deliver them himself into the hands of the Commissioners. Mr. Hancock, before he left this place, said that he intended to send a Gentle-

man to France on some particular business. Cannot we prevail to get this Gentleman to undertake the delivery of our packet to the commissioners, they paying his expence of travel to Paris and back again to his place of business. It is unnecessary to mention the propriety of directing these dispatches to be bagged with weight proper for sinking them on immediate prospect of their falling otherwise into the enemies hands. We sincerely wish you a quick and pleasant voyage, being truly your affectionate friends, Richard Henry Lee

James Lovell

RC (MHi). Written by Lee and signed by Lee and Lovell.

<sup>1</sup> As Adams was in Portsmouth, N.H., arguing a case in the Court of Admiralty when this commission was delivered to his home, he did not accept his appointment as commissioner at Paris until December 23. His letters of December 23 and 24 to President Laurens and to the Marine Committee signifying his acceptance and acknowledging receipt of several official documents that had been sent to him are in Adams, *Works* (Adams), 7:7-8. His reflections on his response to learning of Silas Deane's recall and his reasons for accepting this appointment, which he recorded in his autobiography in 1806, are in Adams, *Diary* (Butterfield), 4:3-6.

## Elbridge Gerry to John Adams

My dear sir,

Camp at Whitmarsh Decr. 3. 1777

I recd your Favour of the 19th Novr on my Way to this Place, & the Business which your Friend Mr Smith requested You to negotiate, shall be carefully attended to & performed.<sup>1</sup> I thank You for the Intelligence conveyed, & would endeavour to recollect in Return, what has transpired at Congress, had not our Friend Mr. Lovell, who as a faithful & accurate Intelligencer as well as on every other Account, has more Merit than his Colleague can boast or attempt to acquire, rendered it unnecessary. But I see You solicitously enquiring for the *State* of the Army, which I will endeavour to give in a few Words. It is, from the best information which I have been able to collect with out yet seeing the Returns, stronger than it has been this Campaign. Cloathing is much wanted, & the States are impressed with the Necessity of exerting themselves to send immediate Supplies; from whence I humbly conceive there is a prospect of speedy Relief. In some of the Officers, there seems to be an irresistible Desire of going into Winter Quarters but others are averse to it, as are Congress unanimously; & Mr Morris & Mr Jones, who are of the Committee, as far as I can collect their Sentiments, are not disposed to come to Camp for the purpose of promoting this plan, to which I think it needless to inform You, I am altogether averse. The Committee have large Powers, & should a Winters Campaign be

determined on, will not be reserve in exercising them so far as shall appear necessary to accomplish something decisive. If calling in a powerful Reinforcement of the Militia, or remaining with the Army untill they shall by one vigorous Effort nobly endeavour to subdue the Enemy, will have a good Effect on the Minds of our Friends in the Army, I think the Committee will most heartily propose the Measures, but will promise nothing from their Inclinations, untill the Issue of a Consultation which is to be held with the General can be known.<sup>2</sup>

You will be informed e'er this can reach You, of Your Appointment to represent the States at the Court of France; I hope to have the Concurrence of your Lady when I urge the Necessity of your accepting hereof; it is the earnest Wish of Congress & every Friend to America that You determine in the Affirmative, & of Consequence, Chagrin & Disappointment will result from a refusal. Genteel provision will be made for the Support of these important Officers, but pecuniary Considerations I know will have no Weight in your valuable Mind, & only mention it as my opinion of the generous Disposition of Congress towards these important Officers. I remain Sir in great Haste yours most Sincerely,

E Gerry

[P.S.] My best respects to your Lady, General Warren, Mr Adams &c.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Adams had written to Gerry on November 19 from Fishkill, N.Y., en route to Massachusetts. "The inclosed Letter," Adams explained, "I this Moment rec'd and can think of no other way to answer the Expectations of Mr Smith, than to request you to take the Trouble of doing what, by the inclosed Letter, I am requested to do.

"I am Sorry to take off your Attention from things of more Importance, or Amusements of greater Pleasure, But having often experienced your obliging Disposition, I presume upon it once more.

"We have nothing New, excepting that a whole Pickett Guard came off together from Kingsbridge two-days ago—which they say is the second Instance of late. The new Levies are very discontented and earnestly wishing to escape & throw themselves upon Mercy.

"G. Gates's Army are passing fast to Head Qrs. I have had vast Pleasure in this Journey in remarking the Difference between the State of the Country and the Temper of Men's Minds now, and last Winter.

"Our Frd Lovell must remember the general Complaints of Danger from the Tories and of the Discredit of Cont. Money, as well as the great Anxiety upon the Minds of the People concerning the Issue of the Cause. All this is now done away. The Tories are universally discouraged and there Appears not in the Minds of the People the least Doubt of the final Success of our great and holy Cause.

"Remember me with every Sentiment of Respect and Affection to the Gen. & Brothers Lovell & Dane, to the Ladies, and the Children of the Family." Brevoort Collection, NBLiHi.

<sup>2</sup> Gerry, Joseph Jones, and Robert Morris had been sent by Congress to headquarters to encourage Washington to conduct a winter offensive. See Committee at Headquarters to Henry Laurens, December 6, and to Washington, December 10, 1777.



## Henry Laurens to John Adams

Sir,

York Town 3d December 1777

The 28th Ulto. I had the honour of writing to you by the Messenger Frederick Weare & of transmitting a Vote of Congress by which you are appointed a Commissioner at the Court of France. Inclosed under this Cover you will find a Commission executed agreeable to the Order of Congress.

You have no doubt heard or will hear before this can reach you of the little affair which happened last Week in Jersey, the attack by the Marquis de Lafayette at the head of about 400 Militia & a detachment from Morgan's Rifles on a Picket of 300 Hessians twice reinforced by British, in which our Troops were successful, killed about 20, wounded more, took 14 Prisoners & chased the Enemy about half a Mile. We learned that General Greene under whom the Marquis had acted had been recalled from Jersey but tis probable from an account received this Morning in a private Letter from Major Clarke something more must have been done before he re-crossed Delaware.

The Major writes that from different & corroborating accounts Lord Cornwallis was killed or wounded, that in an attack made at Gloster the Enemy was beat, left 30 dead on the field & crossed the Water after having set fire to that pretty little Town by which the whole was consumed—that the English Officers greatly enraged against the French Nation openly declare they would gladly forgive America for the exchange of drubbing the French—that General Howe had billeted his Soldiers on the Inhabitants of Philadelphia two in each House & taken many of their Blankets for the use of his light Horse which had occasioned universal discontent & murmuring among the Citizens—that A Ship & Brig. richly laden attempting to come up the River had been lost among Cheveaux de frize.

I beg Sir you will do me the favour to present my respectful Compliments to Mr. S. Adams & to accept the repeated good wishes of, Sir, Your most obedt. & Most humble servt,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (MHi).

## Henry Laurens to the States

Sir,

3d December 1777.

(Introduced by recital of my last date &c, as each Case required.)

Congress ever watchful over the Interests of the United States of America & diligent to defeat the numerous & various practices of our grand Enemy equally Cruel & Subtle have taken under consider-



ation, a device calculated for depreciating the value of the paper Money issued by authority of Congress & of the Several States, after the good people had found it necessary to assert their Rights & to take government into their own hands. The pernicious Stratagem now in view, although the discovery of it, is not quite new, appears more glaring from a late publication in Philadelphia Subscribed by a very great number of those misguided persons who chose to remain in the City & welcome the Enemy to rivet their fetters.<sup>1</sup>

It is also notorious that many timid & Lukewarm friends in Several of the States have, from motives probably more avaricious than directly Inimical, long given a great preference to what is called the old Money, which evidently tends to lessen the Estimation & Currency of the New & does in the Same Instance demonstrate, if not an inclination to overturn our Independency, apprehensions or hopes which ought to be banished from the mind of every Inhabitant in the Union.

From an earnest desire therefore to counteract the wicked projects of our Enemies & to rectify such errors of our almost-friends, Congress have confirmed a Resolution of this date recommending to the States respectively to enact Laws Sufficient for accomplishing these good ends.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honour of forwarding a Copy of the Resolve under this Cover, which your Honour/Excellency will be pleased to lay before the Legislature of<sup>3</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> The "publication" Laurens probably had in mind was a document signed by several hundred Philadelphians which appeared in the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* on November 6 asserting that because of the British occupation of Philadelphia the subscribers would use paper money issued by the old proprietary government and approved by the king instead of Continental currency.

<sup>2</sup> The enclosed resolve asked the states to require persons holding bills of credit issued with the approval of the king "on or before the 19th of April 1775" to exchange them for Continental or state bills. See *JCC*, 9:990.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens added the following December 4 postscript to the text of the letter that he sent to Massachusetts: "While this lay open Congress took before them a Representation of the necessity for preserving from wast Pine Timber fir for Masts and other purposes of Navigation and framed a Resolution thereupon which you will receive with the one above mentioned." *Revolutionary Letters*, M-Ar; and *JCC*, 9:1004.

Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Sir

York 3d December. 1777.

In the Name of Congress I request your Excellency's protection to three Letters for Boston which will be inclosed with this, to be Sent forward with all dispatch either by the present Messenger or by another as your Excellency shall judge best & also of one to

General Gates at Albany.<sup>1</sup> Those Letters all direct the Embarkation of the Troops surrendered by Lt. General Burgoyne to be made at the port Stipulated in the Convention of Saratoga & no other. Congress have received an intimation that attempts were to be made by General Howe or by Mr. Burgoyne under his Commander to obtain permission to march to & embark those Troops at Rhode Island or Some where in the Sound.

I was going to add Several pieces of intelligence received this Morning from Major Clarke relative to the Enemy's Army which had flattered us but a Letter from General Washington of the 1st Inst.<sup>2</sup> which I this Instant received being Silent in those articles I forbear—except that General Howe had billeted his Soldiers in Couples on the householders of Philadelphia which had occasioned universal discontents & murmurs among the Citizens, for this account the Major Seems to have authority & the tidings are not bad.

I have the honour to be with every Sentiment of respect &ca, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient Servant

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to Horatio Gates, December 1, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> This letter is in PCC, item 152, 5:229–30, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:126–27.

## Robert Morris' Committee Notes

[ca. December 4, 1777]<sup>1</sup>

### Objections to a Winters Campaigne

1st. The Number of the Enemy, equal to the Continental Troops under Genl. Washington. The Redoubts, lines & abetties impregnable to any but a Superiour Number of Veteran Troops. Militia will not answer this purpose, therefore an Attack in the lines inelligible.

2d. An attack on the City over Schuylkill by Ice liable to all the above objections because the Enemy will Contract their North lines & run them round the City with redoubts as soon as they know such an attack is Meditated and it is not possible to keep it a Secret.

3d. The Season is so far spent that large Bodies of Militia cannot be Collected from the distant States in time (say all the month of January) & the adjacent States cannot furnish of themselves sufficient Numbers.

4th. If militia in tolerable numbers cou'd be Collected, the Commissaries and Quarter Masters cou'd not supply them with Provisions & Forage.

5. The officers of the Continental Army badly Cloathed & generally discontented, mostly averse to a Winter Campaigne & the Soldiers not sufficiently Cloathed to keep the Field.

The object of a Winters Campain, an attack on the City of Philada, or the Enemies Army. The first not practicable for the reasons given & the 2d of course not practicable unless they will come out & fight.

The best thing to be done—to take such a position with the army as will most effectually awe the Enemy, Cover the Country, and enable the Genl. to take advantage of any favourable Circumstances that may turn up during the winter, by drawing the army into action suddenly if any.<sup>2</sup>

1000 Bell Tents

Camp Auditor

Regulation of Rations

Camp Press

Genl Wilkinson for Secy of War

Lieutt Generals

Forage for Regimental Pay Masters

Inspector Genl of Infantry

Increase the price for Horses

Committee of Board of War to Confer with a Committee of Genl officers for reforming the Army

MS (NN). In the hand of Robert Morris.

<sup>1</sup> On November 28 Robert Morris was appointed, with Elbridge Gerry and Joseph Jones, to a committee directed “to repair to the army” and consult privately with General Washington on “the best and most practicable means for carrying on a winter’s campaign.” Because the committee “conferred with the General on the Expediency of a Winter’s Campaign” on Thursday December 4, it seems likely that Morris wrote these notes soon after their meeting with Washington that day. They appear on the verso of a brief letter Cornelius Harnett had written to Morris on November 30. See *JCC*, 9:972; and Committee at Headquarters to Henry Laurens, December 6, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The remainder of Morris’ notes, which he crowded in perpendicularly on another surface of the folded sheet he was using, apparently pertain to various additional topics that arose in the course of the committee’s conference with Washington.

## Committee at Lancaster to George Clinton

Dear General

Lancaster Decr. 4th. 1777

Among other inconveniences brought on us by our Enemies, fetching of salt from the Massachusetts Bay to cure provisions in the middle Department for the next Campaign, is not the least. However Congress are more alarmed at the apprehension of being disappointed and not getting the salt in season, than from any inconvenience attending the removal, therefore have appointed a Committee to forward that and other business of the Commissarys department,<sup>1</sup> on information a few days ago from the Commissary General of purchases that among other disappointments he was at



that late hour uncertain what steps, if any had been taken, to remove a quantity of salt from Boston to the North River as ordered by Congress, for he was not even assured that his Deputy, to whom he had applied, would accept his appointment. Congress foreseeing their interposi[ti]on necessary lately gave authority to the Governor and Council of Safety of Connecticut to appoint to office or to displace any incompetant person in the Commissary Department, to hire Waggon and with the utmost exertion to forward the salt to the North River to be kept in safety by some person he should appoint, until Waggon arrived from hence for it. But not having heard from that Honorable body, being probably too early, and the Committee anxious to know how, and when to direct the movements of the Waggon procured from the Legislature of this State, have directed me to address you by Express earnestly to request immediate information, what train the business is in? or to what part of the North river the salt is sent? whether the whole or what quantity is arrived and to whose care? as not one step further can be taken with prudence until we have intelligence.<sup>2</sup>

The Committee have such relyance on Governor Trumbull's punctuallity, that I have no orders to repeat any request to him, but to guard against any unavoidable delay which may possibly arise from the miscarriage of a Letter I must beg the favor of you if on enquiry you do not find this Business in a proper train at the North River, that *after dispatching this messenger* you'll be pleased in such case to send Governor Trumbul a Copy of this Letter by Express at the publick Expence. I am in behalf of the Committee, Dr. Sir, Yr. most obt. & very huml. Serv,

Daniel Roberdeau

[P.S.] Please to direct to York Town Pennsylvania.

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup>For the committee appointed on November 28 "to repair forthwith to Lancaster" to confer with the Pennsylvania assembly on supplying the Continental Army in the middle department, see *JCC*, 9:976-78; and Daniel Roberdeau to Elbridge Gerry, December 6, 1777, note 3.

<sup>2</sup>The draft of Clinton's December 10 response to Roberdeau, in which he reported that "not one Gram of the Salt you mention has yet arrived at the North River," is in the Emmet Collection, NN.

## Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Webb

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>

York Town Dec. 5th. 1777.

I have some Time ago delivered your Request to the Board of War, and I have strongly urged the Propriety of permitting you to go to N. York, and to England, if you choose it.<sup>2</sup> The Multiplicity of Business has prevented the Consideration of your Affair, but I am promised that it shall soon be taken up, and you will know the



Result. I am myself going immediately to Virginia for the Winter Season.<sup>3</sup>

I am Sir your most humble Servant, Richard Henry Lee

Tr (ViU). Addressed: "To Captain Webb at Easton."

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Webb (c. 1724–96), a retired British army captain and leader of the Methodist movement in America, who had been declared a prisoner of war by a congressional resolve, had been residing on parole in Bethlehem, Pa., with his family since May 31, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> There is no record of the Board of War's consideration of this request, but Webb persisted in his efforts to secure his release. His January 9, 1778, letter informing Daniel Roberdeau that a prisoner exchange had been arranged and requesting a pass to Philadelphia was read in Congress on January 20 and referred to the board. Despite the fact that the proposed exchange was not effected, Webb was granted a pass on February 20 to travel to Philadelphia to settle some private affairs and he failed to return to Bethlehem. See *JCC*, 7:367, 10:67; *PCC*, item 78, 23:433–34; and *PMHB*, 10:233–35; 12:200–203, 400–404; 13:80, 84; 40:118–19.

<sup>3</sup> Lee was granted leave on November 15 "for the recovery of his health" and, according to his January 25, 1778, letter to his brother William, left Congress on December 6. See *JCC*, 9:928; and Lee, *Letters* (Ballagh), 1:381.

## Committee at Headquarters to Henry Laurens

Sir Camp at Whitemarsh  
Saturday Mornng. 1/2 past 10, Decr. 6. 1777

We arrived here Wednesday Noon, & after Dinner waited on the General to communicate to him, the Business of our Appointment.<sup>1</sup> He informed Us that You had been kind enough to furnish him with a Copy of the Resolution of Congress relative to this Subject, & having previously required of his general Officers, their several Sentiments in Writing, upon the propriety of attacking the Enemy's Lines in Front, & also upon the most convenient Places for quartering the Troops during the Winter,<sup>2</sup> if such a Measure should be found expedient, he delivered to Us their Answer for our perusal. The succeeding Day We conferred with the General on the Expediency of a Winter's Campaign, & received several Letters which he had collected from his general officers on this Subject—but were prevented from forming any Resolution thereon by the Approach of General Howe's Army, which left the City about twelve oClock that Night, & reached the Neighbourhood of this Camp about 5 the next Morning. They are within Sight of our quarters, being posted on Chestnut Hill opposite the right Wing of the American Army, & from their Motions yesterday, General Washington & his General Officers expected an attack at Noon or this Morning; but hitherto they remain quiet. There was yesterday some skirmishing between the Militia & the Enemy, in which General Erving was wounded & taken prisoner; Capt Martial of the Militia was killed, & one or two

privates wounded. On the other Hand about fifteen British & Hessian privates were made prisoner; their killed & wounded We have no Accounts of.

We have Reason to think that the Enemy have come out with their whole force & from the present Appearances that a general Engagement will take place; the Consequences of which must be very important. We shall therefore postpone the further Consideration of the Business on which We Were sent, untill the Event of this Motion of the Enemy shall be known. We have the pleasure to inform Congress that the Army is much stronger than it has *(been this Campaign)* yet been & appears to be desirous of engaging the Enemy; may God grant them Resolution & Spirit, & crown their Endeavours with Success. We remain sir with much respect your most humble servts.

Robt Morris

E. Gerry

Jos. Jones

P.S. A Deserter from the Enemy this Morning informs that they have brot out on Carriages a Number of Boats, which is confirmed thro various Channels.

RC (DNA: PCC, item 137). Written by Gerry and signed by Gerry, Jones, and Morris.

<sup>1</sup> Because of mounting criticism of the defensive posture of Washington and the main Continental Army, Congress appointed a committee on November 28 "to repair to the army, and, in a private confidential consultation with General Washington, to consider of the best and most practicable means for carrying on a winter's campaign with vigour and success." *JCC*, 9:972. After consultations with Washington and a council of general officers, the committee concluded that a winter campaign was imprudent and that large reinforcements were needed before an offensive against Philadelphia could be attempted in the spring. Furthermore, the committee promised to explain to Congress that "prevailing discontents" in the army might be removed by improving officers' benefits. For the committee's proposals for removing those discontents, see Committee at Headquarters to George Washington, December 10, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> On the selection of winter quarters, see Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:133n.86.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to Silas Deane

Sir

York in Pensylvania 6th Dec. 1777

In compliance with the order of Congress We now enclose you their resolve of Novr. 21st last.<sup>1</sup> A duplicate goes by another opportunity.

We are, Sir, &ca,

Signed, R. H. Lee

J. Lovell

FC (DNA: PCC, item 79).

<sup>1</sup> Congress' resolve recalling Deane. Although the November 21 resolve did not instruct Deane to return to America, Lovell secured such a resolution on December 8 to stop efforts "to do away the resolve of Recall." See *JCC*, 9:946-47, 1008-9; and James Lovell to John Adams, December 8, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir

York 6th December 1777.

I have in view the Several Letters which you have honoured me with under the 18th, 28th & 29th of the Month past.<sup>1</sup>

Permit me Sir in the most respectful & Cordial terms to congratulate with you on your Successful enterprize in New Jersey<sup>2</sup>—the agreeable accounts which you have received from home & more particularly on the birth of a daughter—events which conspire to transform mutual joy to your Noble Family & to your numerous friends on each Side of the Atlantic.

I have not been so attentive to all your Commands as I ought & as I wished to have been, but believe me Sir, the delinquency has been absolutely unavoidable—the business of Congress has lain heavy upon me for fourteen days past—their Session each day very long & intervals too Short for dispatching the necessary Resolves & Recommendations to the States, to Officers &c without intrenching deeply on the Night & constantly rising before day light Some times one or two, Some times four hours. This is almost as hard work as one Night a Bed in Camp, indeed these Candle light hours contain the only moments I can pass at the writing Table with any degree of tranquility, while day light continues & almost all the Evening, I am exposed to incessant attacks, too many of them very trifling, but 'tis necessary to hear all before judgement can be formed & it often happens, the most impertinent plunder the most of ones time. Besides we are not in the most convenient Situation in This Town. Where one cannot exercise a right to arrange family œconomy, circumstances will occur to interrupt & impede the progress of business. I am lodged where every body Strives to make me happy, but it would be too unreasonable to expect from them to vary all their movements according to the pressure of my Duty, & impossible to accomodate them to the very irregular periods of our adjournments. I have taken the liberty of obtruding this prolix detail in order to account for my tardiness & in Some measure to plead my excuse, especially for my neglect of your intimation relative to Monsr. Capitaine, which has been with me nine days, yet I have not at all interfered in the business.<sup>3</sup> The Subject important as it is, had wholly escaped my memory. Let me incur your Censure, Sir, in preference to the reproaches of my own



mind, or an attempt to insult you, which would follow a fallacious apology. But Sir, before you will have an opportunity of Superceeding the power you have vested me with, I shall have Set my Self so heartily to the discharge of that trust as will render it unnecessary for you to employ another Attorney & I am not without hope of regaining your confidence. Be assured Sir I will not lose Sight of the Subject until I have done every thing that shall be practicable for accomplishing your desires.

Monsr. Craignie, Monsr. d'baln & Some other French Gentlemen are retained at the public expence while measures for gratifying their wishes consistent with the Service of these States are under consideration.<sup>4</sup> These Gentlemen have many good friends here & Some, more able to Serve them, than I am, but my best endeavours shall never be wanting to forward their attempts in measures calculated for promoting our great Cause.

General Conway has devoted much of his time in York to our Marine Committee by planning & recommending in particular explanations, a Scheme which is very inviting & which, when we are able, will undoubtedly be carried into execution.<sup>5</sup> To part abruptly with that Gentleman would be a circumstance extremely mortifying to a few persons here who hold themselves to be of the best friends to the United States. Had he Served any particular State in the Union with the Same Zeal & good effect which have been conspicuous & universally acknowledged in his Military efforts in the Service of the Thirteen, a deputation would have waited on him long before this hour, either with honorable propositions for retaining, or Commands to take leave of him, in terms Suitable to his Merits. We have Something in view which we hope will hold the General longer in America, when the business is matured you shall be duely informed. Whether our wishes succeed or not.<sup>6</sup>

Monsr. duplaisis was not overlooked in the act of promotion to Monsr. Fleury, I hope this has been Sufficiently explained by that Gentleman's particular friends.<sup>7</sup>

Every account which we have lately received except those from Sir William Howe's printers in Philadelphia indicate the near approach of a Rupture between France & England. The general Embargo throughout the French West India Islands is undoubtedly a Strong prognostic & this fact is asserted by very good authority from St. Domingo.

Your condescension Sir to take notice of the naked condition of our Soldiery is a mark of paternal regard for these your adopted Sons. When I reflect seriously upon this branch of our distress I see clearly black faults in Individuals & shameful neglect at fountain head. My resentment is excited against others, who, however they are Safely hédged in by partial favour, deserve to be charged. The retrospect is extremely painful. The consequence of Some Men's Self



Interestedness & the gross partiality & inattention of those whose duty it was to superintend & to correct betimes, has already appeared in the loss of some lives, cruel Sickness, boundless desertion & what is to follow, God only knows.

I presume the conference now on the Tapis or possibly just finished between His Excellency the General & the Committee from Congress will determine the question relative to Winter Quarters. We are morally certain of Sending you a pretty large Supply of Blankets & Cloths before Christmas. I hope these will reach the Army time enough to give new cause for thanksgiving on the 18th.

The Committee for foreign Correspondence will dispatch to Boston, tomorrow or next day, Letters for France to go by the hands of the Honble John Adams Esquire appointed one of our Commissioners at the Court of Versailles. A Vessel will be purposely equipped for his accomodation & Safe passage. I am sure that Gentleman will be happy in being the bearer of your Commands or in disposing of them in the best manner, if he Should decline the duty to which he is elected by Congress. & I beleive you will find Safe & expeditious conveyances from Camp to Boston.

In time of War with France there will be no tolerable assurance of reaching our friends on t'other Side the Water oftener than one out of Six Letters. I always practiced in former Warr Sending at least a Sixth Copy of every Letter of any importance & found great advantages result from my care, while my Neighbors, less attentive often suffered Losses.

I cannot inform you Sir, any particulars concerning the intended embarkation of Lt. General Burgoyne's conquered Troops. I have dispatched to Boston several Official Letters on that Subject to which I every day expect answers, in the mean time 'tis probable, necessity will oblige Sir William Howe to Support the remains of them where they are, during the present Winter. I have the honour to be, with the highest Respect & Esteem, &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> These letters are in Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:152-55, 160-61. The second letter was written on November 20 and received by Laurens on November 28.

<sup>2</sup> Lafayette's skirmish with a British foraging party at Gloucester, N.J., on November 25. *Ibid.*, pp. 156-58.

<sup>3</sup> Lafayette had asked Laurens' assistance in behalf of Michel Capitaine du Chesnoy, a French engineer who had accompanied the marquis to America and was being delayed by illness in North Carolina. *Ibid.*, pp. 152-53.

<sup>4</sup> Congress eventually granted a lieutenant colonel's commission to Martial-Jean Antoine Crozat de Cr  nis—the "Monsr. Craignie" referred to by Laurens—on November 7, 1778. *JCC*, 12:1109. Having already accepted Col. Augustin Mottin de La Balme's resignation as inspector general of cavalry and agreed to pay his expenses back to France, Congress finally informed him on February 13, 1778, that it had no further use for his service. La Balme had resigned rather than serve under Count Pulaski. See *JCC*, 9:797, 864, 878, 10:157; and *PCC*, item 41, 1:142-45.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Conway's "Scheme" was apparently a plan for an expedition against the British East Indies. See Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:185.

<sup>6</sup> General Conway, who had recently threatened to resign because of his failure to obtain a promotion to major general, was promoted to this rank and appointed inspector general of the army by Congress on December 13. *JCC*, 9:1026; and *DAB*.

<sup>7</sup> Congress agreed to grant an appointment as brevet lieutenant colonel to the chevalier de Mauduit du Plessis on January 19, 1778, but ordered his commission backdated to November 26, 1777, the day François-Louis Teissèdre de Fleury was appointed lieutenant colonel. *JCC*, 9:967, 10:64.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Elbridge Gerry

Dear Sir

Lancaster Decr. 6th. 1777

Yesterday I dispatched a Continental Officer Lieut Keller with a Letter to Governor Clinton,<sup>1</sup> desiring him, if the salt was not arrived at the North River, to send a Copy of my Letter to Govr. Trumbull, and to forward the Express to him, immediately to Congress, as the movement of the Waggon from hence, for my Brethren of the Committee would not consent to any Waggon being sent before advice of the salt, depended on his answer. Therefore if you have recd. intelligence from the C G P<sup>2</sup> at headquarters to make an earlier stop necessary, you must send Waggon, from thence, which likewise would be a great relief, as the Council here express their apprehensions of much difficulty in obtaining them in these parts, owing to the abuse of employing numbers of Waggon in the army which were impressed for other and shorter Services. I expect an answer from Governor Clinton next Wednesday, therefore the presence of the C G P will be necessary here or a Deputy to forward the Waggon. Notwithstanding the Exercions of the Legislature of this State, the Vice President hinted his opinion that military aid would be necessary. I thirst I pant to hear of decisive measures, these only under the auspices of Heaven will succeed. I am about to mount to return to Congress and shall lay a Copy of the Resolves of this Assembly before them.<sup>3</sup> I am very anxious to hear of Gen. McDougal, who I am happy to hear is a little better, the Lord perfect begins mercy. I am, Dear Sir, Yr. most obt. friend & Servt,

Daniel Roberdeau

[P.S.] My love to Genl. McDougal.

Please to enquire of Genl. Kalb whether the Letters committed to him were delivered? whether he has or there are at Head Quarters any Letters for me? which please to forward.

RC (PHarH). Addressed: "The Honorable E. Garry Esqr. member of Congress at HeadQuarters. Favored by Mr. John Jones."

<sup>1</sup> See Committee at Lancaster to George Clinton, December 4, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Commissary General of Purchases, Col. William Buchanan.

<sup>3</sup> A committee of Congress composed of Roberdeau, Eliphalet Dyer, and John

Penn met with the Pennsylvania Assembly at Lancaster on December 2 to discuss measures to be taken to supply the Continental Army, and the following day an assembly committee was appointed to confer with Roberdeau's committee. On the 6th the assembly endorsed the report its committee submitted, and on the 8th Roberdeau's committee submitted a report to Congress on the results of their trip to Lancaster together with the assembly's December 3 and 6 resolves on the subject. See *Pa. Assembly Minutes (1778)*, pp. 14-17; and *JCC*, 9:976-78, 1010.

## Committee for Foreign Affairs to Silas Deane

Sir

York in Pensylvania 8 Decr. 1777.

By accident I find myself called upon singly to execute the duty of the Committee for foreign Affairs in communicating to you an order of Congress of this day respecting your return to America.<sup>1</sup> The order stands in need of no comment from the Committee to elucidate it; and being drawn in terms complimentary to your abilities of serving these United States upon your arrival here, I take pleasure in conveying it, being, Sir, Your &ca. (Signed) J. Lovell

FC (DNA: PCC, item 79).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:1008-9. Lovell revealed his personal motives for seeking Deane's recall and return to America in his letters to John Adams and to Richard Henry Lee, this date.

## Francis Dana to William Heath

Sir

York Town Decr. 8th. 1777

By a letter this day receiv'd from Cambridge I am acquainted that there are about 100 men stationed in and about Fort No. 2, which stands partly upon my farm, who are constantly committing acts of most wanton devastation upon it, pulling up and burning the fences, and destroying the very few trees that escaped the ravages of our army formerly posted there, which besides cutting down several hundred cords of wood, destroyed upwards of 9,000 posts and rails. It was with the utmost difficulty in the Course of the last year I procured sufficient fencing barely to enclose my farm. I cannot think of submitting again to such abominable destruction of my property, to have my farm thrown open, cut up and broken to peices. I must call upon you Sir to protect my property from the ravages of these men, who I understand are under your command, and shall hope that effectual measures will be adopted, without loss of time to put an end to such abusive conduct.

I am Sir, with respect, your hble Servant,

Fra Dana

RC (MHi).

## Eliphalet Dyer to Joseph Trumbull

Dear Sir

York-Town Decembr 8th 1777

Recieved yours from Boston of the 20th Ultmo. I hope before this comes to hand you will receive my last (by Express to Gov. Trumbull)<sup>1</sup> which as I depend you will receive shall not repeat what I so fully wrote you at that time on the Subject of a Board of Warr of which you are Unanimously Chose one & hope Nothing will prevent your Attending at least two or 3 months. You mentione often as in your last the ill Treatment you have recieved. You know it was effected only by a small faction, who had Art enough by specious pretences of publick Utility to Impose upon others just enough to make a Majority (Rhode Island not represented). That faction is now no more. The greatest Union & Harmony Subsists in Congress. I hope before this time Mr Gray has recieved the Assignment of his District & appointed such Deputies as may recieve the remaining Stores on hand. Beside Govr Trumbull has power to appoint both Issuing & purchasing Commissy so far as he thinks Necessary. The Treasury Board have rendred Valid all yr receipts in Consequence of orders from the Genlls. As to what Coll Williams hinted to you is but of little Consequence, it is not Improbable but some might Imagine that you had some Influence on those whom you had employed to prevent their Accepting, but it is not worth minding.<sup>2</sup> We have just recieved Accounts that our Advanced Picquets were Attacked on Fryday morning last by the Enemy which was tho't would bring on a general Action,<sup>3</sup> & the Enemy seemed to threaten An Attack but it is probable Storrs will gain a more full knowledge of this affair on his Journey. Hope to have the pleasure of seeing you here soon. Coll Williams & Mr Low have been on their Journey home some days.<sup>4</sup> As I have an appointment for Next Year conclude to tarry till Spring to prevent my being oblidged to leave home Next summer. My regards & affection to Family & friends. Am Yours, Elipht Dyer

[P.S.] I wrote to my Wife to send me 2 Shirts, red winter Jacoat, 2 pair winter Stockins &c. Hope they may be sent first opportunity.

E D

Where is Benjn & Jabez? What are they about? Is it worth while to get Jabez employd as under Clerk in some of the boards. If so he may learn German or Dutch here as they scarce speak any other language.

E D

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Dyer to Joseph Trumbull, November 28, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> William Williams had hinted in his November 4 letter to Joseph Trumbull that some people believed Trumbull was purposely thwarting the smooth transfer of commissary affairs. See also Dyer to Joseph Trumbull, December 15, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> When Howe marched out of Philadelphia on December 4, British and



American advance parties engaged in several skirmishes as Howe's forces maneuvered in front of the American lines at Whitemarsh. Although a general action was anticipated, Howe unexpectedly returned to Philadelphia on December 8 and set up winter quarters. See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:142-45.

<sup>4</sup> Williams and Richard Law were granted leave by Congress on December 3 and probably left soon thereafter. *JCC*, 9:994. Laws' accounts with the state of Connecticut, claiming compensation from June 14 to December 16, 1777, including travel to and from Congress, are in the Revolutionary War Collection, Ct.

## Elbridge Gerry to John Adams

My dear sir

Camp at Whitemarsh Monday Decr. 8. 1777

Since my last the Situation of the Camp has prevented the Committee of Congress from transacting the Business of their Appointment. The Enemy, the Evening after the Date of my letter, marched out with their whole Force, Which is said to consist of twelve thousand five hundred Effectives. We received information of their preparations a Day or two before, by persons who left the City; & the Camp was alarmed on Fryday Morning abt two oClock. At five the Enemy were about two Miles from the right Wing of our Army, in Sight of our quarters, where they continued untill Saturday Night, during which Time an Engagement was hourly expected. About four oClock on Sunday Morning, the General sent one of his Aids to inform Us that the Enemy had marched to the left, where were the Generals quarters, & had drawn up 2000 Men about two Miles from his place, advancing with another part of their Army, up the York Road. This Morning We are informed, that the Enemy are returning to the Right, from whence I think there is a probab[il]ity of their intending to puzzle our Officers by their Manœuvres, & send their whole Force against some Point. I sincerely wish that our officers would prevent it by beginning the Attack, And untill such an enterprizing Spirit prevails, think that the Enemy will manœuvre to Advantage. There have been several Skirmishes, & many Deserters & prisoners have passed thro the Camp; but these are Affairs of no great Consequence. The American Army are in a better Situation for an Engagement, in Point of Numbers, than they have been this Campaign; may God grant them Fortitude, & crown their Endeavours with Success. You will probably 'eer long, hear of some important Event; & in the Interim give me Leave to assure You, that I remain with much Esteem yours sincerely,

E. Gerry

[P.S.] The Bill on Mr. Mease is accepted & inclosed to Mr. Richard Taylor.

9th Decr. Last Evening the Enemy retired to Philadelphia.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Gerry to John Adams, December 3, 1777.

## Cornelius Harnett to Thomas Burke

Dear Sir

York Pennsylvania 8 Decr 1777

I have not received one line from you since I had the pleasure of seeing you here, as much as I dislike Letter-writing, this is the fourth of mine, in One of which I inclosed One from Mrs. Trist. She is now at Lancaster & "begs (in her Letter to me of the 2d) to know what has become of our friend Burk." She and Mrs. Ross were to have come to this Town on a Visit to Mrs. Swoops, & my Carriage was to have been sent for them, but the Capricious Vixens have put it off to a future day. Mrs. Trist desires when I write to you, that I will "Tender you her best Services."

Inclosed is a hand Bill Printed by order of Congress the Particulars of which you have perhaps seen.<sup>1</sup> As To Our Army it is still near Philadelphia & we hourly expect very interesting News, as Genl. Howe on the 6 Instant with his whole force was in sight of Our Lines & a General action hourly expected. The flower and force of the contending parties are now ready to engage. The Enemy have drawn a Strong reinforcement from N York, & Genl. Washington a much Stronger from Genl. Gates's Victorious Northern Army. I fear however we shall suffer ourselves to be Attacked instead of attacking. This Conduct I believe has often proved disadvantageous. A Committee of Congress now at head Quarters Informs us, that Our Soldiers are exceeding Anxious to Come to a General Engagment, and are in high Spirits.<sup>2</sup> Who knows but this Battle may put a glorious end to the *Land War* in America.

The Virginians in Assembly have set a glorious Example to the Southern States, & indeed to every State in the Union by not only Ordering a reinforcement of 5000 Militia to joyn Genl. Washington immediately, but also to fill up their Continental Battalions with great dispatch. The recruiting Service ought to be attended to in Our State in case of Accidents, as nothing is to be expected from Pennsylvania. Should Our Army be defeated, Our utmost exertions will be requisite.

The several resolutions of Congress sent to the Governors of the States will require particular Attention. That of Taxation is essential above all, the Credit of our Continental Currency depends upon it. The Opening the Courts of Law for the recovery of Debts surely ought to be attended to. The Calling in your paper Currency, especially that Issued under the Authority of the British Government, (as a distinction is made by the Tories & Sordid Whigs already, of at least 100 per Centum which in it's Consequences must ruin Our public Credit) ought to command the Attention of our Legislature.

Coll Martin has been tryed and Acquitted; & has since resigned. Mr. Penn & myself have desired the Governor to apply to the Genl. Assembly to recommend some one or more of Our Colonels as

Brigadiers. Our Troops are uneasy at not having a Genl. Officer of Our State to Command them. You know we have a right to more than One Genl. Officer, should the Assembly think it expedient. I wish you and the rest of my friends would push this Matter. Our officers are exceedingly anxious about it. Coll Sumner writes me it is absolutely Necessary. We are daily entertained by Members of Congress with Paragraphs of Letters, giving an Account of the Surprising exertions of their Constituents. I beg that you will inform me what has been done by Our Genl Assembly in this way. We have often been before them, I hope we shall never be behind them.

Be pleased to tell Mr. Hooper & Mr. Maclain, I shall write them by the next Opportunity, & hope to have it in my power to Inform them of Genl. Howes defeat.

I wish to hear from you & beg you will be very particular in regard to what is going forward in a Political way. I am with real esteem,  
Dr Sir, Your most Obed hul Servt.                      Cornl Harnett

RC (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> This handbill contained the articles of the Saratoga Convention. See *JCC*, 9:1089.

<sup>2</sup> This information was contained in the Committee at Headquarters' December 6 letter to President Laurens, which was read in Congress this day. *JCC*, 9:1011.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Pennsylvania Decr. 8. 1777

I received your favour of the 6 ultimo. Several of those of the dates you mention I never received neither do I think I ever shall. Several of the Deputies of the Post office it is beleived most Scandalously abuse their Trust, and I am certain many Letters directed to me, together with such as I write *Free* upon, are detained by the Way, the Members of Congress Complain generally of this vilanous Practice.

Inclosed is a Hand Bill printed by Order of Congress relative to the Late Convention at Saratoga, this only came to Congress three days ago, as we have had no press here until within these few days & no Gazette as yet published. I shall send you the first.

I am sorry you purchased Coll Kennons Bills, as I am afraid you will be puzelled to get the money, nothing but the Governor of So. Carolinas *Letter of Credit* can save you unless Mr. Kennons Executors first Settle all his Accounts with the Public. I would advise you immediately to send them on for Acceptance & payment. I am Obligated to you for the Wilmtn. Paper, pray Oblige me with them



as they follow in Course or desire Jona. Duncibim to Inclose them to me, I want them all. However to keep you no longer in Suspence, I must endeavour to muster up some News for you. You will be pleased first to Observe that Congress know no more of the Intentions of the Army than you do, until some event or Other takes place, Congress have very wisely determined to put it in Genl. Washingtons power to keep his Own Secrets. A Committee of Congress now at Head Quarters have however Informed us that on Saturday the 6th Instant The Two Armies were in Sight of each Other, the Enemy at Chestnut Hill & Our Army at White Marsh, that early in the morning a Schyrmish happened between a Party of our Militia & an advanced party of the Enemy. We lost Genl. Irwin Taken Prisoner, 1 Capt killed & 3 or 4 Privates wounded, the Loss of the Enemy in killed & wounded not known, but that we took between 20 & 30 Prisoners. A General Engagement was hourly expected, the fate of which will I suppose put an end to this Campaign. Our Army were in the Highest Spirits & wishing to attack the Enemy. Should we be successful in defeating the Enemy, Our Troubles in America on Terra Firma will soon be at an end. But should we be unsuccessful we must be under the necessity of Exerting ourselves to the utmost the next Summer. Virginia have however Voted a reinforcement of 5,000 Militia to be sent forward immediately in Case of Accidents. Alass! We have few Virginias in the Union. As for Pensylvania, she is rotten to the very heart, if she is saved, it will not be by her own exertions. I hope the Assembly will Open Your Courts for the recovery of Debts—That you will immediately begin to lay Taxes as other States have done, that you will Call in all the Currency emitted under the authority of the King of G Britain &c &c these are matters of the utmost Consequence, & Strenuously recommended by Congress to the Several States. Our very Existence as a free People depend on Vigorous Measures immediately to be adopted.

I wrote Mr. Clayton a few days ago,<sup>1</sup> should you see him you may Shew him this mionut Scrawl & tell him he has no right to expect another line from me until I receive another kind of Letter than such as he wrote me by the Marquis La Fayette. As you desire me to write you a great deal of News, I have sometimes an Inclination to invent something very extraordinary, but this matter I shall Consider of; and remain with my respectful Compliments to Mr. Quince & all my friends, Dr Sir, Your sincere friend & Ob Servt.

Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.] Should we beat the Enemy you may be assured of receiving the Earliest Intelligence.



## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York 8th December 1777.

Since my last trouble of the 1st Inst. Your Excellency's favor of that date reached me & was reported to Congress. I have at present only to transmit a Resolve of Congress of the 3d Inst. calculated for effecting the Exchange of the Baron de St. Ouary now a prisoner with the Enemy in Philadelphia or to obtain for him treatment Suitable to his Rank in the French Army.<sup>1</sup>

Congress have taken under consideration General Howe's answer to your Excellency's Letter of the 14th & 23d November & have determined it to be no means explicit & Satisfactory, to morrow 'tis probable a Resolve in consequence of this determination will be passed—My Duty in compliance with the Standing order of the House will not admit of detaining any longer the above mentioned Resolution.<sup>2</sup> I had entertained an expectation of more business for the employment of a Special Messenger otherwise Barry the bearer Should have been dispatched on Saturday.

We learn by a Letter from the Committee of the 6th Inst. that the Enemy's main Army was in full view from our Camp & a general engagement soon expected, I pray God to protect Your Excellency & to grant you Success & Glory.

I have the honour to be with the utmost Respect & Esteem.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Washington informed Laurens on December 14 that it was currently impossible to procure the release of Baron St. Ouary. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:155.

<sup>2</sup> In fact Congress passed a resolve to this effect later this day. *JCC*, 9:1009.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

Decr. 8th. [1777]

Since my signing a letter to you with Colo. Lee<sup>1</sup> an excellent opportunity of sending to France presented; and the Colonel in his way home has carried a Packet to Baltimore, which will go to the Commissioners in a swift sailing armed Vessel.

No. 1 contained.

Triplicates of Letters dated Octr. 31st, Novr. 1st. & Novr. 8th

No. 2

A Letter of Decr. 1st and Resolves respecting Frenchmen:

Sepr. 8. 13. 14. 14

Oct. 4. 10. 13. 21.

Novr. 7. 7. 14. 15.[1]7<sup>2</sup>

## No. 3

Letter of Decr. 2d<sup>3</sup> with a Commission for F., L., A.<sup>4</sup> with a Scheme of Genl. Conway's approved by the marine Committee.

Resolve to recall S.D.—Appointmt. of J.A.—Do. Carmichael—3 Resolves & Instructions Novr. 22. One of Novr. 10 for Importation of Sundries. One of Decr. 3 Loan 2,000,000.<sup>5</sup>

Triplicate of Sepr. 10 Interest on Loan Certificates.<sup>6</sup>

Triplicates of Octr. 18 respecting Georgia giving commissions to raise men in France.<sup>7</sup>

Triplicate of Octr. 21 Power over commercial agents.<sup>8</sup>

Duplicate Letter to S.D. conveying Resolve of Recall.

Letter of Decr. 8th. to S.D. directg. his Return to America.

I now send you Copies of No. 3 except Conways scheme & the triplicate Resolves, which you will carry yourself or seal & forward agreeable to the request mentioned by Colo. Lee Decr. 3d.

It is not possible for me to send Copies of No. 2 by this opportunity. I will send them by way of Sth. Carolina or Boston shortly.

You will make use of the letter to the marine Board herewith sent, when you think proper; and you will, in a joint consultation with the Gentlemen of that Board, make every thing convenient and agreeable to yourself.

Having opposed several attempts of *Jemmy*<sup>9</sup> to *do away* the resolve of Recall, I found a necessity to offer something this day myself, as no limited time had been fixed to Dean's powers.<sup>10</sup> I send a letter for you to seal. I think I have spread as small a Plaister as possible for a great Sore.

Mr. Dana is a most *thorough* and active member; has been put into the Board of War, Marine Committee, and afterward put at the head of the Treasury by the sollicitation of the members of that Board at Duanes Departure; upon which Mr. Dana was excused from the Board of War. Mr. Geary is yet at Head Quarters. We hope there was a general Engagemt. last Friday.

Mr. Read has refused to go a Commissioner to the western Frontiers. He is greatly chagrined at not being put upon the new Board of war, after his name had been mentioned to Genl. Washington. If you should refuse to go over the water, which I pray you may not, He or Livingston would be chosen.

Excuse me to Mr. S. Adams. I am obliged to sit steadily in Congress to make up 9 Colonies, and I have a deal of drudgery to go through from a deficiency of Clerks.

RC (MHi). In Lovell's hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> See Committee for Foreign Affairs to John Adams, December 3, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> For these resolves, which deal particularly with commissions and funds for French officers, see *JCC*, 8:721-22, 739, 743-44, 9:765, 769-70, 792, 799, 825, 875-79, 902-5, 930-32.

<sup>3</sup> That is, the Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris,

December 2, 1777, which described a plan to send two or three frigates to intercept British ships from China and the East Indies as well as others on the African coast.

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Franklin, Arthur Lee, and John Adams.

<sup>5</sup> See *JCC*, 9:883–84, 946–47, 951–52, 975, 989–90.

<sup>6</sup> See *JCC*, 8:730–31.

<sup>7</sup> See James Lovell to William Whipple, November 3, 1777, note 2.

<sup>8</sup> See *JCC*, 9:825.

<sup>9</sup> James Duane.

<sup>10</sup> See Committee for Foreign Affairs to Silas Deane, this date.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir

Decr. 8th. [1777]

By a letter from brother Geary at Hd. Quarters the 6th, 1 P.M.<sup>1</sup> they were in expectation of a general Engagement as the enemy had come out with all their force. There had been a Skirmish the 5th in which Genl. Erving was wounded & taken prisoner and a Capt. Marshall of Militia killed. We took 15 or 16. He tells us that a Mr. Colvill arrived in Camp from Elizabeth Town who had been informed by whig Inhabitants of Staten Island that a Fort was ordered to be immediately built on the pitch of the narrows, and that each Inhabitant was obliged to work every third day. This is confirmed by another Gentleman who was lately on the Island with Genl. Dickinson. This looks as if Howe apprehended a French war.

Genl. McDougal it is thought will recover.

I beg your care of all the letters which I have delivered to Mr. Braylesford for persons out of Boston; either to send them to the first Officer to forward them by any more speedy safe opportunity.

I cannot say any thing about our indoor history beyond what I may have mentioned to Mr. J.A. He will communicate to you whatever I have written which it behoves you to know. I send you a Maryland Paper in which by the great indiscretion of somebody in Congress parts of Bingham's letter are printed which ought not to have seen the light.<sup>2</sup>

Among friends, we have received a most important letter from Mauroy, tis impossible to take any notice of it to him without putting him in Jail.<sup>3</sup>

We could not confirm Deane's contracts without *deranging* our Army; but, we could take up Individuals without the same Effect. What is there grossly inconsistent in this? I am rejoiced we did not employ him.

You are making a terrible rout with yr. Bells & 13 Cannons. How mighty humble must have been the appearance of my two worthy friends<sup>4</sup> who left this the 11th Ult. unattended by light Dragoons?

Mrs. Clymar's Comments upon your Gazette's is highly diverting. But I must say bon Soire. Your Friend and very humbl Servt.

James Lovell

[P.S.] This day I find by a Letter from our Friend General Whipple that 20 Tickets were lost from 14327 to 14,346 inclusive.

The best Compliments of this Family are presented to you; I pray mine may be to Mrs. Adams.

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Elbridge Gerry wrote the December 6 letter of the committee at headquarters to Henry Laurens, which was read in Congress this day. He also wrote a letter of the same date to Daniel Roberdeau—which Lovell explained in the following letter to Richard Henry Lee was written "at ½ past one in the afternoon"—but it has not been found.

<sup>2</sup> Almost certainly a reference to the publication of William Bingham's October 13, 1777, letter which reported military preparations in the French West Indies. See Lovell to John Adams, November 22, note 1; and Richard Henry Lee to Samuel Adams, November 23, 1777. An extract of Bingham's letter appeared in *The Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, December 2, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> The vicomte de Mauroy's sharply critical letter was read in Congress this day. Among the charges made by Mauroy was that "all the world will know that the marquis de Fayette whom no Body can reproach (unless with his being a Frenchman, and the sacrifices he has made to your interest) was retained in your service from political reasons only, and your liking to my Country has made you reject me in a manner not to be mistaken." See *JCC*, 9:1011; and *PCC*, item 78, 15:279–82. For further information on Mauroy's difficulties, see Lovell to Vicomte de Mauroy, September 8, 1777.

<sup>4</sup> That is, John and Samuel Adams, whose departure from Congress was contrasted with that of John Hancock's about two weeks earlier. By coincidence, Samuel Adams was almost simultaneously writing a letter to Lovell containing comments on the pomp associated with Hancock's return to Massachusetts. "I heartily thank you," Adams wrote, "for your two favors of the 12th & 18th of Novemr, the former of which gave me a piece of Intelligence which I thought proper to give the Publick through the News paper.

"Unluckily for me, on my Arrival here I found the General Assembly sitting; and consequently I am plungd in publick Business sooner than I could wish to have been. Among other things I have the Satisfaction of informing you of your Reelection as a Member of Congress. Your old Colleagues are all again chosen. I honestly told some of our Countrymen that I thought it incumbent on them thorowly to acquaint themselves with the Character and Conduct of those who represent them at the Distance of four hundred Miles; but I fear they are too unsuspecting. What do frequent Elections avail, without that Spirit of Jealousy & Strict Inquiry which alone can render such Elections any Security to the People? But surely the more implicit the Confidence of the Publick is, the more circumspect ought those to be, who are entrusted with publick Affairs.

"Mr. [Hancock] came to this Town with great Pomp, and was receivd by the military and naval Gentlemen, as I am informd, with equal Ceremony. His Colleagues arrivd in the Dusk of the Evening and without Observation. He is the most happy who has the greatest Share of the Affections of his Fellow Citizens, without which, the Ears of a sincere Patriot are ever deaf to the *Roaring of Cannon and the Charms of Musick*. I have not seen or heard of any Dangers on the Road that should require Guards to protect one. It is pretty enough in the Eyes of some Men, to see the honest Country Folks gapeing & Staring at a Troop of Light Horse. But it is well if it is sometimes not



attended with such Effects as one would not so much wish for, to excite the Contempt of the Multitude, when the Fit of gazing is over, instead of the much longd for Hosannas." Adams to Lovell, December 8, 1777, Samuel Adams Papers, NN.

## James Lovell to Richard Henry Lee

Dear Sir

Decr. 8th [1777]

The day after you left York, I moved Congress for an Order in the following words. "Whereas it is of the greatest Importance that Congress should, at this critical conjuncture be *well* informed of the State of affairs in Europe, and whereas Congress have resolved that the honble. Silas Deane Esqr. be recalled from the court of France & have appointed another Commissioner to supply his place there,

"Ordered that the Committee for foreign affairs write to the honble. Silas Deane, and direct him to embrace the *first opportunity* of returning to America & upon his arrival to repair with all possible dispatch to Congress."

This I have sent with the other Papers to Mr. Adams and shall send tomorrow a duplicate to Baltimore to go with the packet which you left there.

I did not think it necessary to move that the Committee should be filled up on such a petty occasion, and therefore I spread a small Plaister for a large wound myself by the following.<sup>1</sup>

"Sir

"By accident I find myself called upon singly to execute the duty of the Committee for foreign affairs, in communicating to you an order of Congress of this day respecting your return to America.

"The order stands in need of no comment from the Committee to elucidate it; and, being drawn in terms complimentary to your abilities of serving these United States upon your arrival here, I take pleasure in conveying it, being, sir, your very humb. Servt."

I hope, Dear Sir, you will consider this proceeding as giving some sort of definition to the Recall, and in moderate language; as it stood before, he was to be recalled, but the time when was not in any measure marked out.

As to news I can only give you an Extract from the Committee's Letter at Head Quarters dated Saturday. Decr. 6th 1/2 past 10 A.M. "Genl. Howe's army left the city about 12 oClock that Night (4th) and reached the Neighbourhood of this camp about 5 the next mornng. They are within sight of our quarters being posted on Chesnut hill opposite to the right wing of the American army, and from their motions yesterday Genl. Washington & his Gl. Officers expected an attack at noon or this Morning, but hitherto they remain quiet. There was yesterday some skirmishing between the militia

& the enemy, in which Genl. Erving was wounded & taken prisoner; Capt. Marshall of the Militia was killed & one or two privates wounded. On the other hand about fifteen British & Hessian privates were made prisoners. Their killed & wounded we have no account of. We have reason to think that the enemy have come out with their whole force; and from the present appearances that a general engagement will take place, the consequences of which must be very important. We shall therefore postpone the further consideration of the business on which we were sent, until the event of this motion of the enemy shall be known. We have the pleasure to inform Congress that the army is much stronger than it has *(been this Campaign)*<sup>2</sup> yet been, and appears to be desirous of engaging the Enemy; may God grant them resolution & Spirit, and crown their endeavours with success.

Morris, Geary, Jones.

P.S. A Deserter from the enemy this morning informs that they have brought out on Carriages a number of boats; which is confirmed through various channels. Camp at Whitemarsh."

Mr. Geary writes further to Genl Roberdeau at 1/2 past one in the afternoon of the same day, that there was nothing new in the motion of the enemy since the date of his former letter. That a Mr. Colvill had just arrived from Elizabeth Town who informed that Inhabitants of Reputation, Whigs, from Staten Island gave account that a Fort was ordered to be immediately built on the "pitch of the Narrows" and that the Inhabitants were obliged to work every 3d day. This was confirmed by another Gentleman who was lately on the Island with Genl. Dickinson. This wears the appearance of a French War.

Decr. 10th. As we have nothing new this morning, I conclude no action has taken place either Saturday P.M. or Sunday. All accounts prove that the enemy & the Inhabitants of the City are greatly distressed.

I am, Dear Sir, your affectionate, very humble Servt.

James Lovell

RC (ViU).

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the Committee for Foreign Affairs' letter to Silas Deane, this date.

<sup>2</sup> Lovell placed an asterisk in the manuscript at this point and noted in the margin: "I give you Gearys correction exactly."

## James Lovell to William Whipple

My Dear Sir,

December 8th 1777

I have this evening the pleasure of your letter of the 17th Novr. Am under much temptation to be envious of your domestic joys.

All you knew of the inconveniencies of a Delegate's life at Baltimore, or Philadelphia was shadow to what this town produces. Mr Frost has this day come to a fellow feeling with us.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Geary on Committee at Head Quarters writes 1 P.M. of the 6th that there had been a skirmish on the 5th in which General Erving was wounded and made prisoner and a Capt Marshall of the Militia killed. We took about 16. There was every appearance of a general engagement on the 6th. Our army was stronger than at any time and greatly earnest for fighting. It was thought that Howe had brought out his whole force, and deserters reported that boats were brought out on carriages. I cannot conceive what they are intended for. He writes us also that undoubted information is given that Howe has ordered a fort to be built at the pitch of Staten Island upon the Narrows. This looks as if he expected a French fleet. The inhabitants of the Island are forced to work every third day. You mention my writing the 14th Octr. I believe you will get scrawls of the 21st of that month and the 2d of Novr. Mr S Adams will advertize the tickets in Boston. He left this with Mr J.A. the 11th of Novr.—his Excellency before that—such ringing and firing! There is no one of the Committee for Foreign Affairs here but I, and our Secretary has not joined us since we left Philadelphia. To this source you must refer my seeming inattention to the devoirs of private friendship. You cannot conceive of the extent of my drudgery. But [viz?] I will give you in door history soon. My Colleague Mr Dana is a most excellent member, *thorough* & industrious. He heads the Treasury, *Jemmy*<sup>2</sup> having left us. Gates is invited to head the new Board of War, with Mifflin, Pickering, Trumbull and Peters. The two first holding their rank and commissions of Maj. Gen. to act by order of Congress from time to time according to circumstances. Tr——<sup>3</sup> is peculiarly intended to direct the Commissariate which has been in distraction ever since it was regulated.

Our foreign intelligence plainly warrants the expectation of a speedy European War.

On the return of Geary &c I shall be able to give you a sketch of the winter's plan.

In general we have three secret schemes on foot for improving *your* victory.<sup>4</sup>

With warmest regards to yours, I am, affectionately, your hble  
Servt, J.L.

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> George Frost had apparently just returned from home, after a leave of absence granted by Congress on September 17, 1777. See New Hampshire Delegates to Meshech Weare, September 15, 1777, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> James Duane.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Trumbull.

<sup>4</sup> That is, the capture of Gen. John Burgoyne's army at Saratoga.

## Committee at Headquarters to George Washington

Sir

White Marsh Decr. 10th 1777

In Consequence of the conferences we have had with your Excellency, and knowing yours and your General officers opinions on the Subject of our Mission, we have come to the resolutions contained in the enclosed paper, finding them as far as we can judge most consistent with the Public good.<sup>1</sup>

Among the many reasons offered against a Winters Campaigne we were sorry to observe one of the most prevalent was a general discontent in the Army and especially among the Officers. These discontents are ascribed to various causes and we doubt not many of them are well founded and deserve particular attention, and in the course of the present Winter, will be taken into consideration by Congress, and we hope effectually remedied.

That a reform may take place in the army, and proper discipline be introduced, we wish to see the Military placed on such a footing as may make a Commission a desirable object to the Officer, and his Rank preserved from degradation & contempt; for these purposes we intend to recommend to Congress

That an half pay establishment be formed and adopted in the American Service.

That a pensionary establishment take place in favour of Officers Widows.

That a New regulation of Rank confining it as far as possible to the line of the Army be adopted.

That an equitable mode of paying for *back* rations be ordered.

Should these several regulations be approved and established by Congress (and we have reason to suppose they will) We trust the prevailing discontents will subside and a Spirit of emulation take place among the Gentlemen of the Army to promote the public service and introduce that order and discipline amongst the Troops so essential to the Military character.

As a further inducement the Committee have it also in Contemplation to propose in Congress that the Officers be permitted to dispose of their Commissions under such regulations as may render the measure eligible. We are, Your Excellencys Most Obedt hble servants,

Robt Morris

Elbridge Gerry

Jos. Jones



## ENCLOSURE

The Committee of Congress appointed to confer with his Excellency General Washington on the propriety and probability of a winters Campaign, and for other purposes, have conferred with him on the subject matter of their appointment, and come to the following determination.

That an attempt on Philadelphia with the present Force under General Washington, either by storming the Lines and Redoubts, crossing the Schuylkill, or by regular approaches to the City is an enterprise, under the circumstances of the Army attended with such a variety of difficulties as to render it ineligible.

That the Season is so far advanced as to render very precarious large reinforcements of the Militia from the distant States to cooperate with the regular Army in any attempt across the Schuylkill, and it is apprehended sufficient reinforcements for the purpose, cannot be obtained from the neighbouring States.

That there being time for Congress to determine on the most proper mode of reinforcing the Army before the intended Enterprise can be carried into execution, it is inexpedient for the Committee to adopt measures for that purpose.

That untill sufficient reinforcements can be obtained such a Post should be taken by the Army as will be most likely to aggreive the Enemy, afford supplies of provision, Wood, Water and Forage, be secure from a surprize, and best calculated for covering the Country from the Ravages of the Enemy, and prevent their collecting Recruits and supplies for their Army; as well as afford comfortable Quarters for the Officers and Soldiers.

RC (DLC). Written by Morris and signed by Morris, Gerry, and Jones. Enclosure written by Jones.

<sup>1</sup> The resolutions enclosed with this letter were also included, with minor editorial revisions, in the committee's report to Congress on December 16, to which a copy of this committee letter to Washington was annexed. PCC, item 33, fols. 87-90; and JCC, 9:1029-31. On December 24 a new committee was appointed "to take into consideration the wants of the army, and the letter from the committee lately sent to camp, directed to General Washington," and this committee's January 5 report recommended half-pay pensions for commissioned officers, with the right to sell their commissions to approved purchasers, and pension benefits for officers' widows. The half-pay proposal proved to be one of the most controversial issues considered by Congress and periodically touched off heated debates for several years. The January 5 report was considered and postponed on several occasions during January and February 1778, and similar recommendations were proposed in the March 26 report of the committee sent to camp in January to confer with Washington on reforming the army. After debating and amending this report for nearly two months, Congress resolved on May 15 to grant half pay to commissioned officers for seven years after the return of peace and to pay soldiers and noncommissioned officers an extra eighty dollars at the end of the war. See JCC, 9:1052-53; 10:18-20, 39-41, 285-86; 11: 502-3; and Edmund C. Burnett, *The Continental Congress* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941), pp. 311-16.

## Francis Lightfoot Lee to Timothy Matlack

Sir

York Town Decr. 10. 1777

The last summer a Proposal was laid before Your Assembly, from Virginia; for settling the Southern boundery between the two States.

The Delegates of Virginia received an Answer; but it has miscarried in its passage; and it is now wanted by the Assembly.<sup>1</sup> You will therefore much oblige me, if you will procure a certified Copy, & send it to me by the first opportunity.

I am Sir, Your very hble. Servant, Francis Lightfoot Lee

RC (PHi). Endorsed by Matlack, the secretary of the state of Pennsylvania: "complied with Decr. 27 1777."

<sup>1</sup> Lee was seeking a copy of the Pennsylvania Assembly's June 17, 1777, counterproposals to Virginia's proposals of December 17, 1776. For references to these proposals and the prolonged boundary dispute between the two states, see Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Jefferson, August 25, 1777, note 2.

## William Smith to Unknown

Dear Sir

York Town Decemr 10th 1777

Your favor of last Monday I received by Mr Null yesterday. I have not yet had any opperty to write to Mr. Tolly, but will embrace the first that offers. Any time after this week it will Suit me to Accompany you to Maryland. I am informd the Assembly of that State will rise the last of this, or the begining of Next week, & as a new delegation to Congress will take place before they rise I expect to be released, at my own request. Letters from Head quarters of last Saturday morning, recd. from the Comee. of Congress at that place (Messrs. Morris, Jones & Gerry) Inform that Genl. Howe had Come out with his whole force & taken possession of Chesnut hill within sight of our Army, that a Genl. engagement was hourly expected, that the enemy brot out with them a number of Boats on Carriages. I recd a letter from Bob dated the 6th Inst. at 10 in the morning & which gives the fullest Accot. & from which you have the following extracts Viz.

"I wrote you the other day informing that I had been Posted below, near the enemys lines as a party of Observation. I was harass'd for 4 or 5 Nights in certain expectation of the enemys coming out to give us battle. The night before last my Patroles fell in with their advance abt. 12 oClock. I was only able to fall back before them, & give intelligence, of their motions from time to time. We had a few foot about 25, with which we gave them an occasional fire every 2 or 300 yards so as to amuse them. They advanced I believe with the greatest part of their force as far as Chesnut Hill, of which they took possession abt. 5 oClock yesterday morning. There they re-

mained all day yesterday & manœuvred very considerably. What their intention is we can only conjecture. I question very much whether they will dare to attack us in our present position. Nature has done every for it, & we have added considerably to its strength. Some parties were sent out yesterday morning to skirmish with them, chiefly Militia. A Genl. Irwin of the Phila. Militia is wounded & taken prisoner, one Capt. Killed, & a few privates wounded. They came off shamefully, as they eternaly will do, the enemy are this morning in the situation of yesterday, they made no movement in the night, it would have been lucky if they had, the position of our army was altered after night So as to have recd. them very unexpectedly. A little time will shew whither they mean to fight us. I have some doubts & shall be greatly disappointed if they do attempt it as we are at present. They will probably burn all the little Towns between us & Phila. in order to draw us from our Stronghold. We cannot expect they will leave us quarters so near them. I believe the Genl. will remain entirely on the defensive. It will reflect great discredit on us if they should get back without our touching them, & yet I believe unless they Attack us it will be the case. Indeed it would not be our interest to leave our Strong gro[un]d & attack them on Chesnut Hill. Perhaps rather than not fight us, they may risque an Attempt on us here. A Young man who left Phila. Two days ago adds considerably to the credit of the Accots. you have from Europe. A Packet Arrived on Wednesday Night with intelligence which put the enemy in great confusion. He overheard a Conversation between one of G. Howes Aids & Col. Harcourt, in which they Mentioned Hostillities being comm[ence]d by the French. Their Accots. whatever it was occasioned their order for coming out to be Countermanded for some time. If they have Advice of a War, I suppose they will push for something decisive in this quarter. I beleive we shall meet them on very good terms. Our Army will not be in a better situation."

Probably a decisive blow is struck ere this. If fortunate for us it may Speedily put an end to this destructive war, which god grant.

I am Dr Sir with Esteem & regard yrs. Sincerely, W. Smith

Saturday Morning [December 13, 1777]

The enemy returned to Philada on Tuesday after committing the greatest depredations. Some Skirmishing happend between the Two Armies. Morgans Corps & Abt an equal number of the yagiers had a Serious dispute in View of both Armies, who both lookd on without offering to assist. Morgan prevailed. When the enemy gave way our rifle men raised the war whoop which occasioned them to fly in the greatest confusion, tis Said they left Near 100 on the field. The Maryd. Mil[iti]a likewise have gaind much Credit in a Skirmish on our left wing.

W S

RC (PHi).



## Abraham Clark to William Livingston

Sir, York Town Decr. 11. 1777.

I Arrived here last evening & find Congress had just sent to New Jersey requesting a Representation.<sup>1</sup>

I am just now applied too to know in what light the Prisoners from Jersey Confined in Carlisle are to be Considered, whether Prisoners of War, or Traitors to the State of New Jersey. I mean those taken in Arms with Ricd. Stockton.<sup>2</sup> If they should be Considered by Jersey as offenders Agst. that State they should be sent for & tried, a determination in this affair will be Acceptable to Congress. I may be permitted to say I wish those Prisoners may be treated as offenders Against the Treason Act, I mean such of them as Joined the Enemy after passing such Act.

As I but just arrived here, I have no News to send your Excellency, Remaining Sir, Your Obedt. Humble Servt. Abra. Clark

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Congress had instructed President Laurens on December 9 to "write in pressing terms to the states of New Jersey and Delaware, who are unrepresented, to send delegates immediately to Congress," but Laurens did not send a copy of this resolve to Governor Livingston because of the arrival in Congress of Abraham Clark on December 11 and John Witherspoon on December 17. See *JCC*, 9:1013, 1017, 1032; and Henry Laurens to William Livingston, December 29, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Richard W. Stockton was a major in the loyalist New Jersey Volunteers who had been captured in February 1777 and imprisoned at Philadelphia and Carlisle. Edward A. Jones, "The Loyalists of New Jersey," *Collections of the New Jersey Historical Society* 10 (1927): 211-12.

## Elbridge Gerry to James Warren

My dear sir Potsgrove Decr 12th 1777

I am favoured with yours of Novr 24th<sup>1</sup> on my Way from the Camp to Congress; & find that You have formed pleasing Expectations of Intelligence from this Quarter, which the Events that have hitherto taken Place will no Ways justifie. The brave officer Colo Smith who defended Fort Mifflin informs me, that Commodore Hazelwood who commanded the Gallies & was honored wth. a Sword; has since behaved like a Poltroon, & by not opposing his Gallies to the Indiaman that was warpt thro' a Channel, wch being shoal was unguarded by the Chiveaux de Frize, the Fort was attack'd on every quarter, the Works beat down, Guns dismounted, & the Garrison after suffering greatly, were reduced to the Necessity of retiring. Had they been supported by the Army, who after several Days Deliberation determined to send a Body of Men to Province Island, to attack the Enemy in the



Rear of their Batteries, It is generally supposed that the Garrison would have held out; but before our Troops arrived the Enemy accomplished their purpose. Red Bank or Fort Mercer, which commanded the other, was so slightly built as not to be sufficient to withstand a Cannonade of 24 Hours, & was afterwards evacuated by the Advice of some General Officers sent to view it. Thus the Enemy have possessed themselves of a River, which might have been easily made impregnable, had this State considered its Importance to themselves; & have been defended, had not Delays in the Councils of War prevented seasonable Relief. The Enemy soon after these Events, brot up their Shipping to the City, & are greatly benefited by the Assistance of the Seamen of 300 transports & some Frigates now laying at the Wharves. I was at the Camp upon a Committee of Congress to confer with the General on the Expediency of a Winters Campaign, & to take such Measures thereon as should appear necessary. We were earnestly desirous of an Attack on the City, that by one vigorous Exertion Mr Howe might meet with the Fate of his brother officer G Burgoyne; & should not have hesitated to have called in Militia from Virginia to Massachusetts Bay for this Purpose; but previous to our Arrival on the 3d Instant, the General had consulted his Officers & found them averse with their present Force to an attack on the City or a Winters Campaign, & urgent to retire to Winter Quarters. However, We determined to consider what was eligible, & to have conferred with the Officers at a general Council, & endeavoured to have reconciled them to the Measures proposed, if different from their own Intentions. But General Howe rendered this unnecessary, by marching out with his Whole Force on the Night of the 4th to attack General Washington. His Army consisted of abt 12 or 13000, General Washington's about 20,000 Combatants, of which 4000 only were Militia. Abt 5 in the Morning of the 5th they were within two Miles of the Right Wing of our Army & continued there untill the Evening of the 6th, when they decamped & marched to the left & in the Morning of the 7th attacking & driving in our Pickets, they made Dispositions for Battle within half a Mile of our Camp; but after remaining there untill the Evening of the 8th they marched back to the City. Several Skirmishes happened between the Enemy, & Colo Morgan's Corps & the Militia, in which General Erving commanding the latter, from this State, was wounded & taken prisoner, a Major Morris of Morgan's Corps was wounded & 40 or 50 killed & wounded on our Side. Sir James Murray Captain in the Enemy's Service was dangerously wounded, & a considerable Number of Waggons with wounded Soldiers have been sent into the City; some Inhabitants say 80, but I beleive the Account is rather exaggerated. They have lost by Captivity & Desertions from 50 to 100 privates, burnt several Homes & plundered without Discrimination. Yesterday Morning General Washington decamped with a View of taking Post on the other Side

Schulkyl to cover the Country, & refresh his Men, untill by additional *Reinforcements* he might be able to approach the City, but arriving at Swedes Ford the Militia under the Command of General Potter who had crossed it were attacked by the Enemy within a Mile or two of the Bridge. Whether they had Intelligence of the Orders given by General Washington the Evening before, or intended to make an attempt on the Baggage Waggon, I know not, but am informed that they marched out in the Night with the main Body of their Army. General Washington has not yet crossed, & should he persist in it, I have no Doubt that a general Engagement will ensue. I am sometimes induced to Wish most earnestly that the two Armies were in the eastern States, that the Militia like a Cloud may rise & overwhelm the Enemy; but after many Instances of the most happy Events from what We supposed unfavourable Circumstances I cannot but apply to the present Contest the general principle of Mr Pope, "Whatever is, is best." Congress are exceedingly dissatisfied with the Loss of Forts Mifflin & Mercer & the Miscarriage of the Rhode Island Expedition & have ordered an Inquiry to be made into the Causes thereof. This they have extended to Forts Mongommery & Constitution, being determined in future that no Fort, post or ship of War, belonging to the united States, shall be lost by Misconduct or Cowardice, with Impunity to the delinquent officers.

The late Recommendations of Congress, relative to Taxation, Confiscation, & Regulation of Prices &c, if vigorously executed by the Several States, Will probably have the most happy Effects. The Measure Last mentioned, is essential to the Support of the Credit of the Currency. When the necessities of Life are exceedingly scarce nothing will prevent Extortion, but the Interference of the Legislature; let the Currency be Specie, & the quantity be much less than is requisite for a circulating Medium, And Extortion will still be the consequence, unless the Laws of the State prevent it. Had the Measure been general, when the N E States regulated Prices, I have no Doubt that it would have been successful; at least with concomitant Measures to support the Currency; but the Neglect of it in the southern States was attended with the most enormous Exactions within their jurisdictions, & the Report thereof reaching the Eastern States made the Merchants & Traders very uneasy under their Restrictions & prompted them to send their Effects to other States for a better Market. If there are Doubts & Hesitations about the Matter, I am apprehensive that it will be defeated, & wish not to realize the Consequences; but if the several States, convinced of the Necessity, are determined to confine Avarice to its proper Bounds, I flatter myself they will succeed to their Wishes.<sup>2</sup>

I have wrote to Mr Otis on the Subject of Cloathing, & desired him to communicate to You my Sentiments on the Matter.<sup>3</sup> I am informed by General Washington that 3 or 4000 of as fine Troops as any in the

Service, are unfit for Duty from the Want of Cloathing, & that Sufficient Supply would enable them to take the Field immediately. The Articles therefore must be taken wherever found, & at reasonable prices, since the Neglect hereof may weaken our Army & infer the most ruinous Consequences. I wish to have your Sentiments on the Expediency of preventing all persons whatever (excepting publick officers) from purchasing the produce or Manufactures of these States or any Commodities therein imported, more than is necessary for the annual Consumption of themselves & Families, without Licence therefor, & giving Bonds not to exceed the retail prices stipulated by the States. Few Retailers are sufficient for each County, & an unbounded Licence to Speculators has not a Tendancy to increase Trade, but promotes Extortion. This should not be continued longer than the War, or than is necessary to execute the regulating Acts, & if any person wants to export (altho it answers few other purposes than to supply our Enemies) they may easily obtain a permit.

My Compliments to Mr. Adams's & all Friends, being sir with much Esteem yours sincerely,

E Gerry

P.S. The politicks of France wear an extraordinary Appearance, but G Howe must have recd. alarming Intelligence relating thereto, as he has ordered the Heights of Staten Island near the Narrows to be fortified, & the Inhabitants are obliged to work every third day.

RC (ICarbS: Elsie O. and Philip D. Sang deposit, 1974).

<sup>1</sup> Warren's letter is in Gardiner, *Warren-Gerry Correspondence*, pp. 96-98.

<sup>2</sup> In his January 22, 1778, response to Gerry, Warren wrote at length in opposition to price and trade regulations. Gardiner, *Warren-Gerry Correspondence*, pp. 107-10.

<sup>3</sup> Not found.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Pennsylvania Decr. 12. 1777

I wrote you a few days ago by Post since which I recd. your favour of the 11th ultimo. Genl. Howe Marched out of Philadelphia on Friday last with his whole force with intention as was immagined to attack Genl. Washington in his lines at White Marsh, the Two Armies remained in sight of each Other until Sunday the 7th, Our militia under the Command of Genl. Potter Schyrmished with them, & in the Evening Coll Morgan with his Rifle men had a severe Action with the Enemys right wing, or rather a part of it, the report is that they lost a great many men killed, upwards of an hundred. Our loss but trifling. We drove the Enemy & kept the ground. Genl. Howe filed off his Army in three Columns, & is returned to Philadelphia, &



has thus prevented the drubbing you wish for. Jackey remains Still at Burlington & is well, it is impossible for me to see him there, but I have wrote Mr. Mitchell to let him come to me;<sup>1</sup> there is a very good School in this Town, where I could have him under my own eye, & could bring him home to you in the Spring or let him remain in this Country, as times and Circumstances might admit. Genl. McIntosh only stayed a day here & proceeded this morning to Head quarters.

Whether the Enemy will keep possession of the City this Winter I know not, but should they remain there, they will I think have a very uneasy time of it.

I am Sorry to find the prices of every thing with you so very high, the vilanous practice of raising the price of all the Necessaries & Conveniencies of life is spreading all over the Continent. I hope the several Legislatures of the States will immediately pass Laws to prevent this growing evil, America has more to Apprehend from the Consequences of this Avaritious Spirit, than from two Such Armies as Genl Howes. I find in the Wilmington papers an extract from One of my Letters; what I write my friends in hurry is not intended for the Press. I hope they will in future, should they think proper to publish any intelligence I may send, to do it at least by way of *Extract of a Letter received from a Gentn at York to his friend in Wilmington.*

Many Resolutions & recommendations of Congress have been lately sent to the Legislature of the several States, which will I think (if attended to) answer many very Salutary purposes.

Mr.            Called on me this evening about 8 oClock & sets off early in the morning. I have been Obliged to Attend the Treasury board, & could not sit down to write before 10. I have not time to mention several matters to you, which I must defer for the present. But remember your Bills drawn by Kennon Ought immediately to be forwarded, I am Sorry you did not take Our Treasurers, instead of them; exchange them if you can for such. It ran in my mind that Our Election was to have been in the Fall, but I find it is to be in the Spring. We have as yet no News paper here, which is unpardonable. Give my Compts to Phillis & tell her her Mother I could not get a Sight off, it was long before I could hear of her, & just as I had got into a Train of finding her, we were obliged precipitately to retreat from Philadelphia. Should Genl. Howe remove, I will still find her out.

Write me I desire by every Post. I am, Dr Sir, Your Affet & Ob Sert.  
Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.] My Compt. to Mesrs Quince, Ancrum, Clayton, Brice, Craike &c &c &c.

RC (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> See also Harnett to Wilkinson, November 30, 1777, note 1.



## Henry Laurens to Congress

Gentlemen

York Town 12 December 1777

In the Character of a Delegate in Congress give me leave to address you. Your President has been confined to his Chamber & his Bed for three days & Nights past during which time he has not had three hours Sleep. The Malady under which he labours has made such progress as to convince him by reflecting upon former attacks that he will not be able to move out of the House nor to attend his duty in Congress for some Weeks to come. When he accepted the Honour which you were pleased to confer on him it was with a single Eye to your service in the most comprehensive meaning. Now he finds himself incapable of performing his duty he is anxious to Resign that Honor, which he accepted only on obedience to your Vote.

These, you may depend upon it Gentlemen, are the genuine sentiments of his mind.

There already lies upon his Table much business which with pain he thinks of, because it is not in his power to give proper dispatch to it. Every day unless you are pleased to prevent it, will accumulate the heap, public business will be impeded and some branches run into Confusion.

I therefore humbly move you Gentlemen to proceed to the choice of a President as an act of propriety & necessity. Be assured I should have continued to serve you with diligence & fidelity if my health had permitted, I trust I shall not only be seconded in this Motion but that there will not be a dissenting voice in Congress.<sup>1</sup> I am, Gentlemen, Your faithful Coadjutor & humble servant,

Henry Laurens

RC (DNA: PCC, item 78).

<sup>1</sup>The journals do not record Congress' response to Laurens, but as he explained to John Lewis Gervais, Congress was "not disposed to grant my request but would in preference to appointing a new President, address the Chair & Secretary during my unavoidable absence." Pleased by this "Compliment," Laurens agreed to remain in office. See *JCC*, 9:1022; and Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, December 30, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York 12th December 1777.

I had the honour of writing to you the 8th Inst. by Messenger Barry.

Your Excellency will find under this cover an important act of Congress calculated for availing your Excellency's Troops & for depriving those of the Enemy, of the benefit of provisions adjacent to Philadelphia.<sup>1</sup>

I beg leave to refer your Excellency to the paper and that you will be pleased to excuse brevity as I am confined in Bed by the Gout.

I am, Sir, yours &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See the resolves Congress adopted on December 10 pursuant to the report of the committee appointed on December 8 to study "the most effectual and vigorous measures for subsisting the army under General Washington, and distressing that of the enemy." *JCC*, 9:1010-11, 1013-15.

## Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board

Gentlemen

Decemr. 12th 1777

Lieutenant Barney of the Frigate Virginia will hand you this—he came from Baltimore with a representation from Captain Nicholson that he was deficient in his Complement of men—we have therefore thought proper to despatch him down to your Board in order that you may procure for him 50 or 60 of the seamen belonging to the service now unemployed at Bordenton which we request you will do. The Virginia is under sailing orders and waits for those men to proceed. As we are very anxious to get her to sea we hope you will give all possible dispatch to this business. There will be occasion for Two or three Waggons to carry down the baggage &c and perhaps you may think best to send provisions along. Those Waggons will be furnished by the Quarter Masters Deputy nearest to you and we will just suggest that the men can go from the head of Elk by Water—you will give Lieutenant Barney suitable instructions which he will obey.

There are now at Baltimore lying loaded with Tobacco on the public account a ship and a Snow which the Commercial Committee intend sailing to France, and would wish them to proceed down the Bay under Convoy of the Virginia. But as they are in want of Masters and Crews to navigate them (which it is impossible to procure where they are) we wish you to engage some proper persons for Masters and Mates and send down with Lieutenant Barney ten Seamen for each of the said Vessels. It is probable some of the Officers belonging to the Vessels that were destroyed will be willing to make this voyage. We shall write you again very soon and are,

Gentn, Your hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

Dear Sir,

York Town 13th December 1777.

I have been in Bed these three days confined by a very severe attack of the Gout, this you may remember I often told you would happen to me in this Climate, I shall probably be a cripple half the Winter.

I have received a great many Letters from you by General McIntosh but I have not been able even to read them.

In one packet which I suppose came from France there were eleven Letters for people in Charles Town which I now return, two of them for Mr. Wells. Please to deliver these with my Compliments & thank him for his Letter & other articles. I will have the pleasure of writing to him as soon as I am able, in the mean time I send you inclosed a Letter from Colo. J.L. which will enable Mr. Wells to inform the public of General Howe's late expedition from and return into his fortification at Philadelphia.

General Washington writes to me that a person who came out of Philadelphia informed him that the Enemy had sent five hundred wounded into the City, another reported that eighty two Waggons full of wounded were carried in.<sup>1</sup> Colo. Harkly<sup>2</sup> writes that the Enemy suffered very great losses in their Officers. We shall soon get more particulars. Our loss is in comparison very trifling not above sixty at most killed & wounded.

Present me respectfully to His Excellency the President<sup>3</sup> & shew J.L.s Letter and if you publish either abstract or extract I intreat you to avoid names & give Mr. Wells the same caution & I dont desire the Letter to be shewn to any body else but put among the former.

I have made Historical papers to transmit to you but neither strength nor time will permit at present. The bearer of this only called upon me for a Pass. I have prevailed upon him to wait till I could dictate what is above written &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Washington's December 10 letter to Laurens. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:142-45.

<sup>2</sup> Col. Thomas Hartley.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter this day to President John Rutledge of South Carolina, transmitting "a Resolve of Congress of the 9th calling upon several States & among others So. Carolina to send Delegates to Congress." PCC, item 13, fol. 60; and JCC, 9:1013.

## William Ellery to Nicholas Cooke

Sir,

York Town State of Pennsylvania Decr. 14th 1777

Nothing of Importance hath taken place lately respecting our and the enemys army but a movement of the latter from Philadelphia,



and the circumstances which attended it; an Account of which I will do myself the honour to transmit to you in an Abstract of Genl. Washington's Letter to Congress of the 10th Instant.<sup>1</sup> On Thursday night General Howe moved from the city with all his force, excepting a very inconsiderable part left in his lines and redoubts, & appeared the next morning on Chestnut hill in front, and about 3 miles distant from our right wing. The Pennsylvania Militia were ordered from our right to skirmish with the light advanced parties. Brigr. Genl. Irvine, who led them on, had the misfortune to be wounded and to be made prisoner. Nothing more occurred on that day. On Friday night the enemy changed the ground and moved to our left within a mile of our line, where they remained quiet and advantageously posted the whole of the next day. On Sunday they inclined still further to our left. In their movements their advanced and flanking parties were warmly attacked by Col. Morgan and his Corps, and also by the Maryland militia under Col. Gist. Their loss I cannot ascertain but I am informed it was considerable, having regard to the number of the corps who engaged them. About sunset after various marches & countermarches they halted. On Monday afternoon they began to move, and, instead of advancing, filed off from their right and the first certain Account that I could obtain of their intention was that they were in full march towards Philadelphia by two of three routs. I dispatched light parties after them but they were not able to come up with them. The Enemy's Loss I cannot ascertain. One account from the city is that 500 wounded had been sent in. Another is that 82 waggons had gone in with men in this Situation. These I fear are both exaggerated and not to be depended on. We lost 27 men in Morgan's corps killed and wounded, besides Major Morris a brave and gallant Officer who is among the latter. Of the Maryland militia there were also sixteen or seventeen wounded. I have not received further returns yet. I sincerely wish that they had made an attack. The issue in all probability from the disposition of our troops and the strong situation of our camp would have been fortunate and happy. At the same time I must add that reason, prudence and every principle of policy forbad us quitting our post to attack them.

A few days ago I was presented with a Bill of exchange drawn by Timothy Coffin on Messrs Ellery & Marchant contl. Delegates at Philadelphia for one thousand and fifty dollars, in favour of Richard Ellis or order; which Money I received of the Auditor General by Virtue of a warrant which Mr. Marchant had obtained in July last. The Warrant is for ten thousand dollars.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Marchant had received thereof one thousand dollars, and I received fifteen hundred and sixty, out of which I paid the before mentioned Bill. The remainder I have taken to my own account and given the State credit for it, so that there is a ballance due on said Warrant of seven thousand four hundred and forty dollars. I will take this Opportunity to mention





wrote him or directed Mr Buchanan to Inform him of the difficulties which lie in his department, where he is and what is become of him we know not, we have heard that he had set out for the Eastern world sometime agoe but to prevent every difficulty for the future they have Impowered Govr Trumbull &c to supply every defect in both the purchasing and Issuing Department in that part of the world. Orders have been long Given to Mr Buchanan for 2 hund thousand dollars on the loan office in Boston for the Eastern Department to be paid in preference to any other (as by the returns made from the Office they were good for more than that sum) & to be Immediately sent to Mr Colt, & to save & Indemnifye you the Treasury Board have rendered Valid, and to pass to your Account all the Stores Any Genll Officer shall either take or that you may deliver to their Order. I hope before this you are in a great measure relieved of your difficulties. You Inform me that you were about to set out for Boston & Salem to purchase Cloathing for the Colony & had it not been for Coll Williams' letter<sup>1</sup> Informing you of the jealousies & Suspicions Congress had entertained of your Integrity &c you was about to undertake to supply with provisions from Connecticut but on his Information you declined having any thing to do with it & was so advised by the Govr & his Council. I should have thot that both the Govr & you had been long enough acquainted with Coll Williams, I mean the suddenness of his Temper, the warmth of his Imagination, the strong Impression sometimes a little matter makes on his mind (tho of an honest good heart), to lay so great a Stress upon his painting. I found he had wrote & feard as for some other of his letters they were unguarded & would have no good effect but the Contrary. He Informed me the ground of his letter was when some affairs touching the Commissy department were Agitated in Congress a Certain Member he would not tell me who not knowing as he supposes of his Connection with you Whispered him that he feard you was so put out and Chagrined at the New Regulations that you had in some measure embarrassed and discouraged Others in undertaking. I have no doubt but some body might throw out such a hint to him, and possibly some might have such fears or suspicion; but is that enough to lay so great a stress upon, when you have been repeatedly Assured that Congress in general & believe may say now Universally entertain a high opinion of your Abilities & Integrity in your whole Conduct in that Department. They have given you the Strongest Evidence of it by a Unanimous unsolicited Vote even of every Individual in Appointing you one of a Board the most honourable As well as Interesting to your Country. We had formerly 2 or 3 heady mischief making Gentn. in Congress, they are gone & believe will be here no more, the party is broke up, all is harmony & Union. Schuyler is no more. I was rather sorry to hear your long defence & Exculpation in your letter to Congress against Charges

they had never heard nor believe Suspected and was equally sorry to hear the Governors letter<sup>2</sup> Complaining of the Treatment his sons had received especially at this time, when I can assure him & you that both you & your brother the Paymaster Stand in a fairer point of light with Congress than any two Gentn. ever employ'd by them, yet I am Sensible that at a time, to serve some friend or particular purpose your brother was superseded, & you have had now & then a Squib thrown at you but without making an impression prejudicial to your Carracter. Your brother John was ill treated I believe but all would have been put right had he been a little more soft in his letter. Old Doctr Witherspoon of high Scotch feeling was Netled & without any prejudice against the family principally opposed its being rectified. You say it is a little wonderd at my & Coll Williams Recommendation of a Certain Gentn. I did it from political Motives, which can explain to you when I may have the pleasure of seeing you again, which hope will be soon. Congress have great hopes & expectations from this New Constituted Board of Warr. The Army in every Department wants a total reform & regulation both Internal & External, we are determined by the blessing of Heaven to have it Effectuated, our appointment meets with Universal Applause, great Expectations are from it. We have also Appointed Inspectors Genll of the Army in every department, who will be Executors & Assistants to the board of Warr, will Inspect, make their returns & reports to you. They are Gentn. of great knowledge, Abilities & Integrity and believe will be Intent to reform abuses, regulate disorders, Establish discipline in the Army.<sup>3</sup> Since the above receivd yours from Boston of the 7th, what is past cannot be helpd, we must make the best of what is to come. It is unaccountable what is become of Mr Colts order for 2 hund thousand dollars, a duplicate is now sent & a large sum in Cash, the order on New York reversed & an order to Govr and Council of Safety on Connecticut Loan office in Lieu of it, which we find now to be good for a Considerable sum. Congress have had every department to attend to, hope it is in a good way at last. The Govr & Councill may Employe Coll Champion & whom they please, Assist Mr Colt Cooperate one with another as much as possible. I know they dont want the trouble, but the mistakes in past Will require greater Exertions in the future. Our Army have done so much fighting this Summer they seem much Inclined to goe into Winter quarters and prepare for spring. If so How will have free plunder & possibly disturb them in their proposed quiet.

My affectionate regard to family & am sincerely, Your.

E Dyer

RC (Ct).

<sup>1</sup> See William Williams to Joseph Trumbull, November 4, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> President Laurens responded to this letter from Governor Trumbull on January 5, 1778.



<sup>3</sup> Dyer probably added the rest of this letter a few days later, as the committee report recommending that the army go into winter quarters was read on the 16th and the treasury report ordering funds for the governor and council from the Connecticut loan office was approved on the 20th. See *JCC*, 9:1029-31, 1041.

## Henry Laurens to the Rhode Island Expedition Commissioners

York 15th December 1777

For the satisfaction of the good people of these United States & for the honour of the American Arms, Congress have judged it necessary that a proper & full enquiry be made into the cause of the failure of the late intended expedition against Rhode Island under the Command of General Spencer & into the conduct of the General Officers employed upon that occasion.

For effecting this necessary Examen, Congress have appointed five Commissioners & marked particular directions for their proceeding & from a confidence in your continued Zeal in the public Service have included your name in the Commission.

For your further information please to be referred to a Certified Copy of the Act of Congress dated the 12th [*i.e.* 11th] Inst. which in company with this, I have the honour of transmitting.<sup>1</sup>

I am with great Regard, Sir, your Obedient & most humble Servant

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "General Whipple, New Hampshire—per Mr. Storer. R. T. Paine Esqr. Massachusett, by the same. Egbert Benson Esqr. New York—by the same. Oliver Ellsworth Esqr. Connecticut, by Browne. Henry Marchant Esqr. Rhode Island. By the same."

<sup>1</sup> Owing in part to repeated solicitations from Congress and some northern state conventions, the governments of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts agreed in the fall of 1777 to launch a joint expedition against the British troops occupying Rhode Island. Joseph Spencer, a Continental major general from Connecticut, was placed in command of the expeditionary force, which began to gather in Rhode Island early in October. For various reasons, however, including manpower and supply shortages, tactical disagreements, and loss of the element of surprise, the attack was canceled in mid-October and the troops withdrawn.

Congress, increasingly impatient with unsuccessful commanders in the field, therefore decided on December 11 to appoint five commissioners to go to Rhode Island to ascertain the causes of the expedition's collapse. Those chosen were Egbert Benson, the attorney general of New York; Oliver Ellsworth, a member of the Connecticut Committee of the Pay Table and a nonattending delegate; Henry Marchant, a Rhode Island delegate on leave from Congress; Robert Treat Paine, the speaker pro tempore of the Massachusetts Assembly; and William Whipple, a New Hampshire delegate and militia officer. Although Benson and Whipple were unable to serve, the other three commissioners met in Providence in February and March 1778, taking testimony and examining evidence already gathered by various state authorities, which they dispatched to Congress and which was referred to committee on April 8. This committee



finally submitted a report to Congress on August 7, 1778, which, while curiously avoiding the reasons for the expedition's failure, described the many congressional and state pleas for such an attack and recommended that Congress reimburse the three New England states for their undertaking. Congress approved the report the same day it was submitted and thereby brought this matter to a close.

See JCC, 9:975-76, 988, 1018, 1027, 10:93, 322, 11:758-61; Rhode Island Expedition Commissioners to Henry Laurens, February 13 and March 27, 1778; William R. Staples, *Rhode Island in the Continental Congress, 1765-1790* (Providence: Providence Press Co., 1870), pp. 163-64; and "Biographical Sketch of General Joseph Palmer," *The New Englander* 3 (January 1845): 13-22.

Henry Marchant, writing to Richard Henry Lee from Providence on December 15, 1777, made the following comments pertinent to the Rhode Island expedition: "Our State are taxing with great Spirit, considering our Circumstances and the Enemy we have still to defend against. There has been most shameful Conduct in the Expedition intended agt. Rhode Island and I think a more shameful Report has been made by the Come. appointed by the N.E. States to examine into it. I am informed Congress mean to make an Examination themselves—I hope they will not rest satisfied with what has been done. At least I hope this State will not have a Comr. forced upon them, in whom depend upon it, the People can place no Confidence in his Skill or Abilities. I fear We might call in vain upon Our Militia upon the most pressing occasion while he remains here. How long are we to be ruined by false Delicacy! I wish that Congress would in some self Evident Cases exercise the Sovereign Right of removing. The publick Good is sufficient Cause. Old Men, weak Men, And Drunkards ought to be dismissed without Delay. I do not mean however to rank that Gentleman under the latter Class. He is a sober Man, a religious Man, and a Friend to his Country—but is this enough?

"Woolens, Shoes & Stockings I am informed might have been had months since had the States been particularly addressed upon the Subject. This was left to the Cloth. Genl. In some States he has never appointed any Deputies—and in others His Deputies have most certainly neglected their Duty. And as to the Commissary Departments we may refine away to the Ruin of Our Army—And ruined it will be under the present System & Men if continued. The States are however exerting themselves in obtaining Cloathing for the army, and many Necessaries are I believe before this, arrived at Head Quarters.

"How has sent shipping to Rhode-Island for Burgoin's army not doubting but They would be admitted to march thro' this State and embark them—assigning for Reason I'm informed that there will be a Risk in going round the Cape. Impudence to perfection! The number of Shipping I'm informed is not sufft. for the Purpose, and as they came from the Delaware, I can't imagine they have Provision sufficient for such a Voyage. I do therefore more than heretofore suspect a dishonorable Intent. Congress I hope will not abate an Ace of the Compact to accommodate them or lessen their Risk." Lee Family Papers microfilm, ViU.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Johnson

Sir

York 15th December 1777.

My last was dated 3d Inst. & was conveyed by the common post, hitherto I am without the honour of any of your Excellency's favors.

Congress having in prospect, business of the utmost importance, in which the Interests of the United States are most deeply concerned,

& regretting the present State of the House consisting of so few Members, as are insufficient even to supply Committees for the dispatch of business with that regularity & celerity which Congress wish to preserve, have Resolved to recommend to such States as are most deficient to send forward an additional number of Members immediately. The Resolve dated the 9th Inst. will be found inclosed. Your Excellency will perceive Maryland is included & will be pleased to take such measures as the occasion shall require. I am with great Respect &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

## Francis Lightfoot Lee to Richard Henry Lee

Dear Brother,

York Town Decr. 15. 1777

A Letr. from the Genl. of the 10th advises that Genl. Howe after many manœuvres in which he gained no advantage & a good deal of skirmishing, in which he sustained pretty considerable loss, retired with precipitation on the 9th into Philaa. laying waste every thing before them.<sup>1</sup> We hear that a large party has since been over Schuilkill towards Lancaster foraging, & have been attacked but our Accts are very uncertain. Our Comtee is not yet returned from Camp, & we have no news from the Eastward, except that a Privateer was arrived from France, which says, all American Vessels were stoped in the harbours; She cut & run the night after the order was published. How do you account for it? Conway is made a Majr. Genl. & Inspector of the Army.<sup>2</sup>

Inclosed is a Letr. from Your Son Tom covering bill of loading for Goods purchased for us by our bror. Wm. I suppose your things are in my packages; cant you contrive to have them landed at Green Spring & from thence conveyed to the Northern Neck.

We have reason to think that there are many emissaries of the Enemy sent into the Country & some to the parts of Virga. adjoining this State, I wish you wou'd urge the Executive power to have some active spirited whigs in those Counties to keep the most vigilant Eye over them, especially where there are prisoners of War. We find the people of Frederick begin to be poisoned. Love to Chantilly & compts. to all friends,<sup>3</sup> especially Monsr. Loyauté. Adieu.

Francis Lightfoot Lee

RC (ViU).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's December 10 letter to President Laurens is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:142-45.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 9:1023-26; and James Lovell to Horatio Gates, November 27, 1777, note.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Lightfoot had written a brief letter to his friend Landon Carter on

December 7 in which he noted: "The making of Molasses, Sugar, & Rum from Cornstalks has a considerable progress in the Eastern States. An Acre of the tops yields a hogshead of Molasses. I have seen some of the rum, very good. They press out the juice with a common apple mill. My bror. Richard who I make no doubt you will see, can give you a full account." Lee-Ludwell Papers, ViHi.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir

Decr. 15th [1777]

Mr. Finnie D.Q.M.G. writes from Virginia of the 5th.<sup>1</sup> "From the low state of our Ln. Office I have been able to receive only 24,592 Dollars. Very heavy demands will be made against me in a short time, you will please therefore to favour me as soon as possible with some means of paymt. By advice of the Governour & Council I appointed a proper person to go to the Southwd. to purchase to the amount of 20,000 Virga. Curry. of Blankets, Woolens &c. for our soldiers. I expect soon to hear from him & receive Demds. for large Sums which must be complied with. Our Assembly now sitting have passed a Law to prevent Monop[oliz]ing &c. and to seize upon all Woolens &c. for sale fit for cloathing our Soldiers under the Command of his Excely. G.W. which was done in so secret a manner that Commissioners were appointed by the Govr. to put the act in Exec[utio]n & several seizures were made in several parts of the country before it was known that such a Law was intended; by virtue of which we have in possession the very Articles we were in immediate want of to the Amt. of upwards of £20,000. This will create another heavy demd. upon *me* perhaps. By two Vessels from Nants in France just arrived, I have procured abt. 500 Blankets. wch. wth. 118 just come to hand from another quarter I will send forward as soon as Waggon & Teams can be procured, together with the late Seizures. The Flints wrote for by the Secretary shall be immediately forwarded."

Another letter<sup>2</sup> says "the Courts will be open and taxation take place at least 1/2 per Cent on the value of lands & Slaves, we got 1500 pounds worth of Cloaths & Blankets at Petersborough only, by our late act. Two Vessels from *Ireland*, by way of Nantes, are arrived in York wth. 500 Blankets, 1500 yds. Frize & about 2,000 Bushels of Salt. Doctr. Lee is at Nantes—a large Packet from the alderman<sup>3</sup> is come to hand for R.H.L."

I suppose this Packet can contain nothing new, as the Vessels left France early in Sept. They had then heard of Burgoyne's Success at Ty and were told Howe would have Boston. The Alderman writes Sept. 10th to Colo. F Lee that "he does not despair. America must be independent or no Peace. France, however she may trim, will never suffer you to be intirely driven out of the field, tho she may



wish to see both parties well beaten." This I judge to be the true and only Character of France. I am impatient at not hearing from our Commissioners. A Vessel is expected daily at Baltimore the Swallow, Capt. Martin, in whom Mr. McCreary sailed from B & reached F Sepr. 2d. Colo. F.L. Lee begs you would excuse his silence as he has large packets to answer to Virginia, by the Return of the post Tomorrow. He sends the kindest Regards to you. I beg you would accept those of your humb. Servt.

J L

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> William Finnie's December 5 letter to the Board of War was read in Congress this day. See *JCC*, 9:1026.

<sup>2</sup> Probably Benjamin Harrison's December 5 letter to the Board of War, which was read in Congress this day. *Ibid*.

<sup>3</sup> That is, William Lee.

## Thomas Burke's Remarks on the Articles of Confederation

[ante December 16, 1777]<sup>1</sup>

I consider the Congress at present as a General Council of America, instituted for the purpose of opposing the usurpations of Britain, Conducting the war against her, and forming foreign alliances as necessary thereto. Incident to this must be the General direction of the Army and Navy, because they are the instruments of the war.

Also for the providing necessary funds for the disbursements, because without them neither Army or Navy can subsist. Also the making Treaties with Foreign Powers, to be binding on all the states alike and equally to affect them, because this is the essence of foreign Alliance.

This Idea of the Powers, use and authority of Congress, excludes all coercive Interpositions within the States respectively, except with respect to the Army and Navy, because the States are competent to every exertion of power within themselves. Also the appointment of ways and means for supplying the Contingents of Men, Money or other things otherwise than by recommendation which always implies a power in the State to reject.

Also the power of imprisoning or otherwise punishing any Citizen, because that is not necessary for the end of their Institution, and every individual is to be tried and punished only by those Laws to which he consents. The Congress for this reason can give no authority to any Man or set of Men to arrest or punish a Citizen, nor can it lawfully be done but by the Authority of the particular states.

Also all pretence for continuance of a Congress after the war is concluded, or of assuming a power to any other purposes than what



are above expressed. The Congress now determines by a majority which need not be more than five, and which seven is always conclusive. If the last mentioned exclusion be not right, the Congress might engage the states in Confederacies, injurious to all but the continued majority.

'Tis my Opinion that every State has a right to control the Cantonement of Soldiers within their Territories, but as all the Governments are not yet settled, it might be inconvenient to say any thing of it, and it is not necessary. Whenever a State finds occasion to exercise this right, I think none will be hardy enough to dispute it. But I believe it will be necessary for every established State to provide a mode whereby the Civil Authority can interpose to prevent Courts Martial from exceeding their Jurisdiction. 'Tis true a Soldier expressly consents to be bound by the articles of War, and to submit to the Martial Jurisdiction, but in all Trials, the first Question is the Iden[tity] which must in this case be the same as Soldier or Citizen? If the Court Martial can determine this question, it is in their power to call any Citizen a Soldier, and to subject him to military Law. This evidently points out the necessity of the check of the civil authority. The Confederation is a subject of the highest importance, but not having yet passed the House, except when in Committee, it seems it must not be laid before the assemblies. I shall deem it my duty to examine every Article of it with the most critical scrutiny, and submit my thoughts to the Assembly, and receive their Instructions. But I am told by the President that it will violate my obligation of secrecy, to do this before it has passed the House.

If the Assembly agree with me in the foregoing Ideas, of the Power, use and Authority of Congress I beg leave to recommend that they instruct their Delegates not to depart from them, nor to consent to any act or resolve which shall tend to exempt the Courts Martial from the Control of the civil power in the States.

I am not desirous of these Instructions in order to restrain the Delegates. I believe none of them even without Instructions would vote contrary to those Ideas, but as all questions are carried by a majority in Congress, the state may perhaps be bound tho' her Delegates should dissent, especially where the Instructions are so general and Powers so indefinite as ours. I wish the State therefore to instruct, and by some public act to disclaim being bound by any resolves contrary to her Instructions. Without something of this kind, according to the present Constitution of Congress it may be impossible for the Delegates to preserve the Independence of the State, from Encroachments for by that Constitution they are not allowed to protest or enter their Dissent.

These thoughts are humbly submitted to the Honorable the General Assembly of North Carolina by their most respectful humble  
 Servant,  
 Thos. Burke

Tr (Nc-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> Burke prepared these remarks for the North Carolina Assembly before he learned of the approval of the Articles of Confederation by Congress on November 15. As he took his seat in the lower house of the assembly on December 1 but did not learn of congressional approval of the Articles until December 16, it seems likely that he composed these remarks sometime during these two weeks. There is no evidence in the assembly journal of when Burke submitted them to the legislature; and the text of the document comes from Gov. Richard Caswell's Executive Letter Book.

## James Duane to Horatio Gates

Sir Manour Livingston 16th Decemr 1777

Congress have been pleased to appoint Brigr. General Stark to the Command of an Enterprize which they have much at Heart—It's success under Providence depending entirely upon Secrecy. For fear of a miscarriage of the Dispatches, I am directed in a personal Conference at Albany to explain their Views and deliver to him his Commission and Instructions. Where that General is employd at present Congress is uninformed and have therefore directed me to trouble you with forwarding the enclosed Letter.<sup>1</sup> One from you might quicken his Journey to Albany, and as no Time should be lost I must request that Favour, as well as that you will be so obliging as to employ in this Business an Express on whose Diligence you can rely, and to order him to proceed to this place with General Stark's Answer as soon as possible. If you can form any probable Conjecture when it may be expected your Opinion will regulate my Conduct.

Be pleasd, Sir, to accept my sincere Congratulations on the glorious Success of the American Arms under your immediate Command. A Series of Victories so critical and decisive cannot fail of producing, with the Blessing of Heaven, The most important and permanent advantages to the United States; while they have rescued this devoted Government, already almost ruined, from total Destruction.

I hope to have the Pleasure of an Interview with you before you proceed to Congress. From what I learn it would ease your mind on a Subject which, without any Reason, has given you Pain. You may be assurd that you hold a high Place in the Esteem and Confidence of Congress.

We may hourly expect important news from the Army under General Washington. As I passed thro' Reading I collected the following Circumstances, on the Truth of which you may rely. General Howe marched out of Philadelphia the Evning of the 4th Instant with all the troops he coud collect leaving only 1500 men to garrison Philadelphia. In his march he was harrassed by Morgan's Light Infantry and the militia. He however on the 5th took possession of Chestnut Hill within two miles of our army which was strongly

posted to the number, I believe, of 20,000 on the Hills near White Marsh Church. On the 6th he made a Movement round the Left of our Army which that night laid on their Arms expecting a general Attack. It is thought that the intention of the Enemy in this Enterprize is to try their Strength with General Washington, & if successful, to burn Lancaster, Reading, Pott's Grove and German Town; and then to return to Philada. Despairing of their original Plan of subjugating America they descend to a predatory war. To burn the inland Towns, & to spare only the Sea Ports, which are exposd to their Navy, seems to be their humane Project. The wanton Destruction of Kingston is no bad proof that this is at least a probable Conjecture.

Governour Clinton three days ago removd to Pocepesy where he proposes to meet our Legislature. I flatter myself that you will confer with him on the Defences of Hudson's River before your Departure; as Congress depends on your advice, and considers the Security of the Communication between the Northern and Southern States as an Object of infinite Importance.

I left York Town the 5th Instant. All your Friends there are well. Be pleased to present my most respectful Compliments to Mrs. Gates, and tell her that Mrs. Peters has been in the utmost Peril, but is happily deliverd of a Son. Our mutual Friend Mr. Morris with Mr Jones and Mr Geary are with the grand Army as a Committee of Congress. You will also be pleased to deliver the enclosd to your Son.

The Route I pursued is, I believe, by far the most comfortable especially as you will be accompanied by a Lady. I therefore recommend it to you, vizt, thro' Fish Kill, New Winsor, Warwick, New Town in Sussex, Easton, Bethlehem, Allen Town, Reading, Manheim, and across the Susquehannah at Anderson's ferry, which is only ten miles from York Town.

If you have any news be pleasd to favour me with it by the Bearer.

I have the Honour to be, very respectfully, Sir, Your most obedient  
& very humble Servant, Jas. Duane

RC (NH).

<sup>1</sup> See Duane to John Stark, this date.

## James Duane to Philip Schuyler

Dear General

Manour of Livingston 16t Decemr. 1777

I am chargd with dispatches from Congress which I left the 5t Inst. to the Commissioners of Indian Affairs for the Northern Department & directed by Congress to hold with them a personal Conference, as some objects of very great Importance are to be considered.<sup>1</sup> For this purpose I intend to visit Albany. In the mean time it will be neces-



sary to convene the Commissioners. When that can be effected I can form no Conjecture but must wait for your Information. I am obliged to see General Starke at Albany, & General Gates is desir'd to send for him. You will judge from Circumstances how long it may take before the Express can reach him & Return to me & he repair to Albany. From your opinion on this Point, I shall regulate my Journey; for which I shall therefore be oblig'd to you; as well as for fixing the meeting of the Commissioners Accordingly that I may be saved the Trouble of a double Attendance at this inclement season. Before I see you, Congress will forward a Eagles Tail & Rattle Trap sent them by the Creeks as a proof of [their] Friendship. The use of it will appear from a Talk to [the] Six Nations with which I am charged; but need not now forward. I am entrusted to make any alterations which on Conference with you circumstances may require & I beleive Some will be found necessary.

When I passed thro' Reading the two grand Armies were within 2 miles of each other. Ours encamped on the high ground near White Marsh Church & the Enemy on Chesnut Hill. We may therefore soon expect a very important Event. God grant that it may be favourable! With respectful compls to Mrs. Schuyler & the young Ladies, I am Dr Sir, Your most Obed huml Servt.

FC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> See the "speech to the Six Nations and instructions to the commissioners for Indian affairs in the northern department" approved by Congress on December 3. *JCC*, 9:994-99.

## James Duane to John Stark

Sir Manour Livingston 16th Decembr. 1777.

Congress from a high Sense of your Patriotism, Activity and Valour have conferred upon you the Chief Command of an important Enterprize which they have very much at Heart: As under divine Providence it's Success entirely depends upon Expedition and Secrecy, I am enjoined by Congress to meet you as soon as possible at Albany, and there deliver your Commission and Instructions and in a personal Conference fully explain their Views. The Time you will be pleas'd to fix, and you may be assur'd, if Health permits, of my punctual Attendance. When you are apprized that not a moment is to be lost, and that the Security of the united States, and of your own in particular now calls for your Exertions, I am perswaded all further Arguments must be unnecessary.<sup>1</sup>

I left your Friend General Folsome in Good Health and Spirits at York Town the 5th Instant. He desired me to present you with his respectful Compliments.



It is with singular Pleasure I congratulate you and your brave militia on the Honour which you have acquir'd at the important Battle of Bennington. I feel it the More gratefully as it has eminently contributed to rescue this devoted State from the Dangers with which it was surrounded.

Waiting for your speedy answer by the Return of the Express, whom you will order to take the shortest Route to this Place, I have the Honour to be, Sir, Your most Obedient, humble Servant,

Jas. Duane

RC (NhHi).

<sup>1</sup> On December 3 Congress approved instructions authorizing General Stark of New Hampshire to raise a force of volunteers for the purpose of "surprizing and destroying the enemies shipping at St. John's or elsewhere, on Lake Champlain." After some hesitation Stark agreed to undertake this mission, but before it could get under way Congress decided instead, on January 22, 1778, to mount an invasion of Canada and placed the marquis de Lafayette in command with Stark as one of his subordinates. See *JCC*, 9:998-99, 10:84-85, 87; and Justin H. Smith, *Our Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony: Canada and the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 2:473-74, 482-85.

## Cornelius Harnett to Thomas Burke

Dear Sir

York Pennsylvania Decr. 16. 1777

This day I received your favour of the 6th last Month and am glad to hear of your safe return to your family, & have also the pleasing expectation of seeing you soon again in Congress. I wish it was in my power to give you such Intelligence as I know you wish for. Our Army remained almost inactive at White Marsh since the affair at German Town, until the 6 Instant when the Enemy marched with almost their whole force in the night, & appeared towards Noon in Sight of Our Army, took post on Chesnut Hill & other Strongholds in that Neighbourhood, a General Battle was daily expected; but Neither of the Generals seemed inclined to quit their advantageous Post. In the mean time some small Schyrmishing ensued. Our Militia with Genl. Irwin at their head attacked one of the Enemys advanced parties & a Smart firing followed which lasted about 15 Minutes. They then retired to Our Main body with the loss of 2 Captains & 10 to 12 men killed and wounded; among the Latter was Genl Irwin who was taken prisoner being advanced too far before his men; the Enemy's loss not known. The Enemy for several days kept up a Shew of attacking Our lines but on the 10th filed off in three Columns & returned Within their Redoubts. Coll Morgan with his riflemen had a very smart Action with a party of the Enemy in which he lost more men than he has lost the whole Campaign, 26 in Number. The Enemy must have

Suffered exceedingly from the fire of those Excellent Marksmen. Genl. Washington was informed by some deserters that their loss in killed & wounded was 500, but this acct. he thinks Exaggerated. I fear it was. Genl. Howes Intention in this Maneuvre was to have attacked Our Army Expecting to find them off their guard, in this he was dissappointed, & then by keeping up a Shew in front with his light Troops, he marched off his Artillery & heavy armed Troops towards the City; soon after those in front filed off on the right and Left, & by a precipitate March Out general'd us, as usual, a Large body of Our light Infantry were ordered to pursue but could not come up with them until they had got within the Lines. Thus ended this affair. They have since sent a Large body over the Schuylkiln to forage. The Militia under Genl. Potter were Surprised, but maintained a Smart Action with them for a Short time, took several of them Prisoners, but lost an equal Number at least of his men taken by the Enemy; this Account comes not from Authority but is believed. We have as yet no News Paper Published in this Town otherwise I should send you some of them. Since the Confederation has been finished, several Reccommendations to the Legislatures of the States have been sent by Expresses. I need not mention them, they will Speak for themselves. I beg you will inform me of the Temper you find Our Assembly in. Are they inclined to pursue Spirited Measures? For Gods sake fill up your Batalions, Lay Taxes, put a Stop to the Sordid & avaritious Spirit which has Infected all ranks & Conditions of Men. Regulate the Prices of all Comodities, at least such as are immediately useful to Our Army; The united States will not much longer be able to procure them at the very exorbitant prices they are now sold at.

We have already received an Account from Connecticut that their State is much dissatisfied with the mode in the Confederation of fixing the Quota of Each State by the value of Lands. Numbers of Inhabitants including Slaves is their favourite Plan. A Valuation of all Property throughout the Continent was allowed to be the most equitable mode for fixing the Quotas, but this was said to be impracticable.

All our foreign Intelligence indicates that Europe will soon be in a flame. Let us not depend upon this. If we have virtue, we certainly have power, to work out our own Salvation. I hope without fear or trembling.

I wish I could inform you of a Victory Obtained over Gl Howe. I fancy we must wait until Stern Winter builds a Bridge over the Schuilkiln. Small parties of our Army have been Successful however in taking several of the Enemy Prisoners. 95 arrived in this Town the night before the last & three officers of Low rank. They go on to Virginia Tomorrow.

As to the prospect you wish for, of accommodating Mrs. Burke here, I beg you will not think of it. Be assured it is Impossible, you will

hardly be able to get a bed to Sleep in. I should be sorry to see my Country woman in distress which *be assured* must be the Case if you bring her here. No my friend, let her remain at your own peaceful Mansion in expectation of better times. Be assured that my expenses since I arrived in this Town, a very little more than two Months has been upwards of £200 Currency, and I never Lived in so wretched a manner in my life. I shall be under the Necessity of procuring an advance from the Treasury of at least 1000 Dollars over and above my Allowance from the State, which is very handsom. I shall be content if this will bring me home with a Single dollar in my pocket. Mention not this; If you do, I am sure you will not be believed, but it is as true as the Gospel. God only knows what this Country will Come to at last.

Mrs. Trist is well at Lancaster. I have had great pleasure in Corresponding with her.<sup>1</sup> She is a sweet sensible Creature. I shall forward your Letter tomorrow. I wish you health, Happiness & a good Session. With unfeigned esteem I am, Dear Sir, Your affect & Obed Servt.

Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.] I am so harrassed by Attending Congress, The Treasury board, the Commercial Committee &c that I can hardly find time to write to my friends. Tell Messs. Hooper & Maclain I shall write them by next Post. It is now 11 o'Clock at night. Hence not time to Copy or Correct.

RC (NcU).

<sup>1</sup> Harnett's letters to Mrs. Trist have not been found.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Pennsylvania Decr. 16. 1777

I wrote you a few days ago in Answer to your favour of the 11th ulto. You are Constantly Plaguing me for News, & I can hardly ever meet with any thing Interesting to Communicate. The Campaign has been very inactive, ever since Genl. Howe took possession of Philadelphia. However he made a Movement on the 6th Before day, with almost his whole force, leaving only a few men behind & appeared in Battle Array before Our Army at about a Miles Distance, Expecting to find them unprepared, in this he was mistaken. Some small Schyrmishing ensued in which the British Troops suffered more than Ours, Genl. Irwin Attacked their light Troops with some of Our Militia, we took some prisoners about 20 & lost about 10 or 12 killed & wounded, the General was among the Latter & taken Prisoner by the Enemy. Coll Morgan had a very severe Conflict with another party, this Gentn commands the Virginia & Pennsylvania Rifle men. He lost about 26 also killed & wounded. The Enemys loss must have



been very Considerable as those troops are excellent Marksmen, a Deserter says 500. Genl. Howe after Maneuvering for several days, kept up a Shew of his light Troops in Front, marched off[f] the remainder of his Army to Philadelphia, the light Troops following precipitately and altho a party of Our light Infantry pursued, as soon as the intention of the Enemy was known, they could not Overtake them until they had reached their lines. 95 Prisoners came to this Town the Night before last, they will tomorrow be sent to Virginia. Genl. Howe Ravages & destroys wherever he comes, German Town we are informed was pillaged in a most Shameful manner, many of the fine Houses near the City have been plundered & burnt, in Short as far as they can reach they Spread Devastation around them among Whigs & Tories indiscriminately. Heaven in its own good time will I hope punish those Butchers & Murders, there must certainly be some chosen Curse laid up in Store for them. We hear that a large body of the Enemy have been since Over the Schuilkil to plunder the Inhabitants. Genl. Potter who Commanded a Body of the Militia on that side has had an Action with them, he took some Prisoners with the loss of as many or more of Our men, the Particulars of this affair are not as yet come from Authority.

I have not yet received an answer from Mr. Mitchel about Jackey, unless you soon Contradict it I shall have him with me. I remain, Dr Sir, Your sincr. friend & Ob Sevt. Cornl Harnett

[P.S.] My Compts. to Mr. Quince & all my friends.

RC (NcU).

## Charles Thomson to Moses Rawlings

Sr.

[December 16, 1777]

In Consequence of the above resolution I am to desire your attendance on Congress to morrow morning at 11 oclock;<sup>1</sup> and in order that you may be enabled to give fuller & more compleat Information I am to inform you it is expected You will commit the information to writing, being as particular as you can & that in drawing up the information you will bear in mind that possibly Congress may think it necessary to authenticate the information by requiring you to swear to the truth thereof. I am, Sr, Your humble Servt,

Chas Thomson

RC (MdHi).

<sup>1</sup>For "the above resolution" requesting Col. Moses Rawlings, commander of one of the Additional Continental Regiments, "to give such information, as has come to his knowledge, respecting the treatment our prisoners in the hands of the enemy receive," see *JCC*, 9:1029, 1032.



## Committee of Commerce to Thomas Morris

Commercial Committee

Sir

York in Pensylvania, Decemr. 17th. 1777

We have received Authentic information through your Brother, that you have unhappily preferred dissipation to business and are so bent on the pursuit of pleasures as to be an improper Agent in the business committed to your care.<sup>1</sup>

You are therefore, hereby dismissed from your employment of Superintending Agent to the Commercial business of the United States of America & we require you forthwith to cause the Accounts of all the Public business that has been under your direction to be made up and transmitted to this Committee. Messrs. Pliarne, Penet & Co and Mr. J. Gruel whom you have employed in these transactions must ship Goods agreeable to their Contracts for any balance that remains in their hands and transmit us an Acct Current closed. Your Commission on that business they will Account with you for.

We are, Sir, Your humble servants,<sup>2</sup>

Robt Morris

Cornl Harnett

W. Smith

Fras Lewis

Willm Ellery

RC (MA). Written by Robert Morris and enclosed with his December 17 letter to the committee. Signed by Morris, Ellery, Harnett, Lewis, and Smith. Addressed: "To Mr. Thomas Morris in Nantes."

<sup>1</sup> Robert Morris' reaction to his brother's misconduct is discussed at length in Morris' December 26 letter to Henry Laurens. See also Robert Morris to John Brown, December 24, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Ellery, Harnett, and Lewis had been appointed to the Committee of Commerce on December 13. JCC, 9:1023.

Committee of Commerce to  
Pliarne, Penet & Co.

Commercial Committee of Congress.

Gentn.

York in Pensylvania, Decemr. 17th. 1777

The Secret Committee of Congress were sometime since dissolved in order to [close] their Accounts & this Committee appointed [to] take up & continue the Public business and having received undoubted intelligence that Mr. Thos. Morris one of our Superintending Agents in France, has neglected the duties of his Station for the sake of pleasurable pursuits we have now displaced him from his employment. It is therefore become necessary that you Gentn whom he employed in transacting the Public business, shou'd make up your

Accounts, Shipping by the first good Conveyances the Amount of any balance that is in your hands in an assortment of Articles agreeable to your Contract, and you will transmit us all the Accounts Sales, Invoices and other Documents that have not already come forward with final Acct Curr't balanced as already mentioned. You are to charge Mr. Morris's Commission of two per Cent on the Gross Sales of the Cargoes consigned him and Account with him for it, but not for any other part of the Effects that have come into your hands as we shall look to you for the whole, and if your Accounts give satisfaction, Mr. Pliarne being on the Spot, you will probably continue to enjoy considerable Commissions from this Continent, altho' the direction be taken from Mr. Morris. Therefore the sooner you comply with our present requisition the sooner will your chance of future business take place. We remain, Gent., Your obedt hble servts.

Robt. Morris      Fras Lewis

W. Smith      Cornl. Harnett

Wm Ellery

RC (PPRF). Written by Robert Morris and enclosed with his December 17 letter to the committee. Signed by Morris, Ellery, Harnett, Lewis, and Smith. Addressed: "To Messrs Pliarne, Penet & Co, Nantes."

## William Ellery to Nicholas Cooke

Decr. 17th [1777]

Since I wrote the foregoing, Genl. Washington transmitted to Congress a letter from Genl. Heath to him, in which he informed G.W. that Application had been made to him by the officers concerned in the Rhode Island expedition for their pay, and desired to know whether the Continent or the States who furnished the Troops were to pay the expence. This brot on the question which I had hoped would never have been started; and after a slight agitation, in which I perceived it was the Sense of Congress that the Continent ought to bear the Expence, it was referred to a Committee to examine the Journals in this Regard, and to report to Congress.<sup>1</sup>

Congress this day recd. a Letter from Genl Washington dated near the Gulph mill Decr. 14th of which the following is an Abstract.<sup>2</sup> On Thursday Morning we marched from our old Encampment and intended to pass the Schuylkil at Maddison's Ford where a Bridge had been laid across the River. When the first & part of second Division had passed found a body of 4000 under the Command of Ld Cornwallis possessed of the heights. Our troops were obliged to repass the bridge which prevented our getting over until the succeeding night. This manœuvre on the part of the enemy was not in Consequence of

any Information they had of our Motions; but was designed to secure the pass while they were foraging in the neighbouring Country.

They were met in their advances by Genl. Potter with part of the Pennsylvania Militia who behaved with bravery and gave them every opposition 'till they were obliged to retreat from their superior numbers. He collected a good deal of forage and retired to the City the night we passed the River. No Discrimination marked his proceedings. All property whether friends or foes that came in their way was seized and carried off.

G. Washington it seems means to go into Winter Quarters at Wilmington, which I am afraid will be attended with pernicious Consequences.  
Wm Ellery

P.S. Decr. 19. Lt. Col. Barton who arrived this day from the Army tells me that our Army will hut this Winter at Valley forge near the Schuylkill & about 20 miles from Philadelphia.

RC (R-Ar). A continuation of Ellery to Cooke, December 14, 1777.

<sup>1</sup> Congress finally decided on August 7, 1778, that the expense of Gen. Joseph Spencer's abortive Rhode Island expedition would "be borne by the continent." *JCC*, 11:761. Gen. William Heath had raised this issue in a November 24 letter to the Board of Treasury that Congress had read on December 15 and referred to the committee "to enquire into the rise of the expedition against Rhode Island." *JCC*, 9:1027; and PCC, item 157, fol. 29.

<sup>2</sup> See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:155-60.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York 17th December 1777.

I had this Morning the honour of receiving Your Excellency's dispatch dated 14th & 15th Currt. inclosing Copy of a Letter from Lt. General Burgoyne, which, without reading them through, I sent directly to Congress, from whence I am this moment charged with a Resolve, formed, I presume, as the present necessary direction for a reply to the British General's application to your Excellency.<sup>1</sup> The business appearing to me to demand all decent respect & dispatch I shall put it immediately in motion.

I have the honour to be with sincere Esteem & regard &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> After reading General Burgoyne's request to Washington for "leave to embark his Troops at Rhode Island or at some place in the sound," Congress resolved that Washington inform Burgoyne "the Congress will not receive nor consider any proposition for indulgence or altering the terms of the convention of Saratoga, unless immediately directed to their own body." *JCC*, 9:1032; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:157-58.

## Robert Morris to the Committee of Commerce

Sir

Manheim <sup>1</sup> Decr. 17th. 1777

In consequence of the mention made of my Brother by Dr Franklin & Mr. Deane in their Letters to Congress last Summer I wrote a Friend (in whom I had & still have the Utmost confidence) to watch his conduct & give me a just acct. of it. I confess myself to have been much provoked at the Commissioners for writing "That Mr. Thos. Morris must be displaced from his agency" without assigning their Reasons & the more so as they had promised me to assist him with their Advice & inform me of his behaviour but seeing him publickly Attacked & not receiving in due time any private Letters from them on the Subject I gave belief to a Tale that was told me by Persons from France insinuating that my Brothers Agency interfered with theirs & was in favr. of another person. Under the influence of this Belief I wrote Mr. Deane a Letter which I am sorry for having since discovered that he did not merit the censures I very freely passed on him.<sup>2</sup> [He] wrote me an acct. of my Brother but the Letter did not come in time. He mentioned in genl. terms that he was too eager in pursuits of pleasure [to?] admit (he feared) of due attention to business. At the same time I recd. many letters from My Brother assuring me of his constant attention, care & assiduity which was also confirmed to me by some Masters of Ships whose business he transacted. This I thought good Authority & felt myself happy in the expectation [of?] him become Usefull to his country & himself but alas the Scene is changed & this day I had the Mortification to receive a Letter from my Confidential Friend assuring me that my Brothers Conduct is exceedingly blamable. [He] has put all his business into the hands of Messr. Pliarne, Penet & Co[mpan]y & J. Gruel of Nantes. These Gentn. are sufficiently solid I believe & imagine they can not have much Money or Effects in hand because they have generally sent [us?] Goods as fast as they recd. Cargoes. However they do not hold themselves obliged [to] acct. with Mr. Lee for the sd Management or for the Rait. This I fancy has brought on some dispute. I think as they do that Mr. Lee is only to take up the business from the date of his appointment & from that time all the Cargoes have been addressed to Wm. Lee & Thos. Morris Esqrs. Jointly. Consequently [. . .] as Authority only those & I believe it will be best for the Commercial Committee to require Settlement of all the other publick Concerns & direct the Balla[nce] if any is due to be shipped out in Goods agreeable to Contract. This will end the Bickerings between them & Mr. Lee & induce them to dispatch the Goods especially if the prospect of future employment is held out to them & which for aught I know they may merit as well as others. Under this Idea I have wrote the Letters inclosed herewith



as from the Commercial Committee and have signed them.<sup>3</sup> If they are approved you & the other members had best sign 'em also and have them Copied in the Letter Book & dispatched by the first Conveyance. With respect to Mr. T.M. it was never my Wish or desire that he should be employed one Moment longer than he rendered Service, therefore I have wrote a Letter of Dismission to him also enclosed herewith which I desire may be signed by the Committee if approved & forwarded immediately. It is needless to [say] how much my Feelings are wounded on this occasion. Let it suffice [that] I do my Duty to my Country by taking these measures the Moment I knew them to be necessary & the Letters that convince me of it are but this day arrived. Perhaps it may be necessary that this & the Letters enclosed with it be laid before Congress & if you think so I can have no objection. Indeed I woud chuse Congress should be made acquainted with my readiness to dismiss Mr. T M. from their Service the Moment I thought he merited such dismission. The Bills mentioned in the Letter to Mr. Lee Mr. Ceronio was authorized to draw & they must be paid as he sent Arms, Powder, Blankets &c. for the amot. last Winter. I am, Sir, Your Obedt. humble Servt.  
(Copy) Robt Morris

Tr (MH-H). Addressed: "To The Honorable Wm Smith Esqr, for the Commercial Committee, York." In the hand of John Swanwick and signed and addressed by Morris.

<sup>1</sup> After his service with the committee at headquarters during the week following December 3, 1777, Morris began a six-month leave of absence from Congress which he spent primarily at his home in Manheim, approximately 25 miles northeast of York. Although he had requested leave to put his personal affairs in order, and "to adjust some of the Publick accounts that cannot be done whilst my attention is engaged" in Congress, his private and public activities were so inextricably intertwined that congressional affairs were never far from his attention. He intermittently worked on the accounts of the old Secret Committee (as the Committee of Commerce had been known before its reorganization in July 1777), and a considerable quantity of correspondence pertaining to the Committee for Foreign Affairs and the Marine Committee continued to be delivered at his home almost the entire period of his leave. Furthermore, delegates and other officials visited him periodically, and on at least four occasions he made brief trips to York (in his personal correspondence he stated on March 10, 1778, that he was setting off for York and on January 5, March 29, and April 21 that he had just returned). Therefore, although Morris did not actually attend Congress from the beginning of December until about May 13, 1778, his correspondence from Manheim during this period holds considerable interest for the study of Congress.

<sup>2</sup> See Morris to Silas Deane, June 29, 1777, notes 2 and 4. For his troubles with his brother, see also Morris' letters to Deane, Thomas Morris, and James Ross of January 31, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> See the letters of this date of the Committee of Commerce to Thomas Morris and to Pliarne, Penet & Co.

Thomas Burke's Notes on the  
Articles of Confederation[ca. December 18, 1777]<sup>1</sup>

## Article 4th

The Constitution of No. Carolina permits not the Privilege of Citizens to any who have not resided therein 12 months, and paid Taxes. (Local protection is given to all within the Territory.) The Legislature therefore cannot ratify an Article which gives such privileges to persons residing in other states. Our Commons are voted for by all free Citizens, and if the Inhabitants of our Neighboring States have the privileges of Citizens in ours they might insist upon the right of voting for members of our Legislature which would be a political absurdity. It seems therefore proper that this article should be Amended by adding after the clause refer'd to—*not inconsistent with their respective Constitutions*. The Provisionary clause of this Article, in my Opinion, deprives the States of every power to increase or regulate their particular Commerce, Agriculture, or Manufactures. They cannot prevent by duties or restrictions importations, or Exportations Injurious to any of them. This surely is what no Staple State ought to admit, and that of all ours, who has so many Staples.

## Article 5th

This article supposes that the appointment of delegates is at the *<discretion>* Will of the Legislature. Tis an Error with respect to No. Carolina. Those Officers are the creatures of the Constitution, are to be annually chozen by ballot, and if superceded must be in the same way. No choice can be made for less than one year. This article wants alteration if all the States are Circumstanced as ours. For us I think the following would do, "Delegates Constitutionally appointed and Controlled by the respective States shall annually meet in Congress on the first Monday in November." The remaining part of this article tho [unjust?] in the mode of determining Questions, must be submitted to for the sake of public Convenience, but if the latter clause exempts the Delegates from Prosecutions in their respective states for their misdemeanours in Congress, it takes away the Control of the states, and being Contrary to our Constitution cannot be admitted.

## Article 6th

The first clause of this Article in my opinion imposes very unnecessary restraints upon the States. The various affairs of a free Commercial People will require them often to enter into Conferences and agreements with foreign States, and the Commercial Interests of each state ought to be its own peculiar care; and Subject [to] no

Control or Interposition from others I can see no propriety in such a Restraint as each State ought, in my opinion, to be at least at liberty to Enter into any Commercial Treaty it may think proper so that it be not inconsistent with Treaties entered into by the united States. These seem to me to be of Importance to the Staple States. There can be no reason for subjecting them to restraints which may arise from the Jealousy or ambition of others. Each should be at liberty to increase its wealth and strength as much as possible. Tis sufficient that they be restrained from using them to the Injury of their Neighbors, and that they be obliged to Contribute in Just proportion to the Common defence.

The latter part of the first section of this article is right.

The second Section goes too far. The Word Treaty ought to be left out. The States will often have Occasion to Treat on subjects which Concern none but those Engaged in it; and there can be no reason for restraining them from it. If the united States have power to prevent any alliance or Compact injurious to the whole it is sufficient, and this purpose will be answered by giving them a Negative on all Compacts between two or more States.

The third Section is right.

The fourth Section so far as it regards the Navy appears to me to be impolitic. It speaks a Jealousy which I fear will for ever prevent the united States from having a powerful Navy, tho' nothing is more Essential to its future Security against foreign Enemies. The Emulation of the States in this particular ought to be encouraged by every means, for that Emulation will be the most powerful Instrument for giving to the whole a formidable Navy, and with such they will be secure against the World. I see no reason for the Jealousy. The fleet of one State cannot endanger an other because they are accessible to each other by Land, and a Sea Invasion might very readily be Counteracted by a Land Invasion. The rest of this Section is right.

The fifth Section is right in every thing but what relates to Indian Wars, and it will be difficult to frame an Article to suit in this particular. I am inclined to think this might be left for the Subject of partial alliances, for all the States are not Interested in it and yet Several States have One Common Interest in it, and there are Still Some particular Interests in which but One or few States are Concerned.

#### Article 7th

I have no Objection to this provided the provision recommended by Connecticut takes place.<sup>2</sup>

#### Article 9th<sup>3</sup>

This Article is exceedingly Comprehensive, it's matter is of the greatest Importance, but its arrangement seems to me much too



Complicated. My own Idea of the Power which Congress ought to possess is founded on the following propositions.

The United States ought to be as One Sovereign *(power)* with respect to foreign Powers, in all things that relate to War or where the States have one Common Interest. But in all Commercial or other peaceful Intercourse they ought to be as separate Sovereigns.

The first is Necessary, because No One can be defended from the Evils of war but by the united force of all, and to make this force the more Effectual, their union for its Exertions should be as close and simple as possible.

The Second is Necessary, in order that each may acquire Strength to as great a degree as its Circumstances may admit, without being Subject to restraints which may arise from the Jealousy of its neighbors. And as the growth of each is its own proper Concern, and cannot be prejudicial to the whole, but on the Contrary advantageous to them as long as the force acquired is Still Subject to be applied for the Common Security, by One Common Magistrate, I can perceive no reason for a power in any Common Council which can restrain the Commercial or other peaceful Intercourse of the States, among themselves, or separately with foreign Powers, and it can answer no purpose but to subject the Property of the States to partial Combinations in the Common Council.

A private Citizen who embarques a part of his fortune in a Co-partnership would be deemed very unwise should he suffer the members of that partnership to possess a power that might restrain him from [improving] the remaining part of his Fortune to what extent he pleased Consistent with the Common Interest. Equally unwise in my Opinion is it for a State who unites with others for Common defence to submit to a power which may prevent the growth of her Strength and Oppulence. Pursuant to these propositions my Ideas of the powers which ought to be in Congress are as follow.

In General they should have the Power of declaring War, and, Con[cluding] peace. But wherever a war should be declared before actual Invasion or Commencement or Threatening of some actual Hostilities, any State ought to be at Liberty to renounce the War and become a Neutral power but when Hostilities are actually Commenced against any of the States, it ought to be deemed Common Cause, and none should withhold assistance.

Also they should have the Power of Concluding Treaties of alliance equally binding and affecting the whole for the purpose of strengthening the Common Security. This should be restrained like the former to defence, for it ought always to be in the Power of each state to remain Neuter in all Offensive Wars whether the united States be principles or allies in it.

These Powers necessarily require that the Congress should send



and receive Embassadors, but not that this Power should be sole and exclusive. I should like an Amendment to this purpose "shall have the sole and exclusive Power of declaring War and Concluding Peace, and of Sending, and receiving ambassadors *in the name of the united States* of Entering into Treaties and alliances *equally binding upon, and affecting the whole.*" Here the Exceptions to those general rules should come by way of provision. The remaining powers in the first Section of this article are Incident to the power of declaring War. They are only an Execution of the Law of Nations *quoad hoc*.

The second Section is [b]adly worded, "the united States shall be the last resort on appeal in all disputes between the states." I have no Idea of an appeal, or last resort unless there be some prior Jurisdiction and prior resort, and I know of no such thing between the States. But my Objection to this Section is more Substantial. If the Congress are to Nominate the persons who Constitute the Judicatory I can easily foresee it will not always if ever be impartial. The Congress cannot know any persons to appoint, but such as are Suggested by the parties and that State which has the prevailing Interest in Congress will thus Nominate all the Judges. Their being drawn from each State, and afterwards drawn by Lot is no Security, because three persons in each State are easily corrupted. If this article were amended by giving the Nomination by ballot to the States not Interested it would answer better to my Idea of an Impartial arbiter between the States, and the Congress should have this Power only as the Official Instrument for erecting the Occasional Tribunal, and for carrying its decrees into Execution. As it now stands they have it too much in their power to Influence the decisions which they themselves are to execute which in my Opinion is dangerous in any political Community.

The third section might be easily fitted to the Amendment I propose.

The four[th] Section includes many powers which I cannot perceive either to be necessary or proper for Congress. Regulating the alloy of Coin struck by authority of any of the States, fixing the Standard of weights and measures, regulating the Trade and affairs with Indians, and all that appertains to the Naval force which ought never in my opinion to be under any restraint or authority of Congress except in time of public war. The first of these is dangerous, because it gives to a Council which is Composed of but very few members from each State and which is without Control an unlimited power over the property of Individuals. The power to increase the alloy is a power to pay off any Debt with less than the sum Contracted for, and involves an extensive power over property.

In the fifth Section the power to borrow money and emit Bills, is an unlimited power over all property. It is a power to Tax at pleasure, and ought never to be in Congress but when given by the

States upon Special Occasions. It is Contrary to the fundamental Maxims of our Constitution, Vizt [that no] Man is to be subject to any Imposition but by [consent of] his representatives. The Congress is not the representative of any one Community. The members are delegates from the Legislatures, not represent[at]ives of the people, and the Delegates of one state are not the choice of the other States nor has any state a check on the Delegates of another State.

If the Legislature can delegate their power to tax to any person they may Delegate it to the Executive Magistrate, and may make him absolute, by giving him the power over the property of the Community. If they cannot delegate to him they cannot delegate to any other. The delegation in any case is transferring that power to others which the Constitution vests solely in the Legislative Magistrate and is as unconstitutional as if the Governor or Judges were to Substitute other persons to exercise their respective powers, or as if the assembly were to appoint substitutes to Enact Laws or impower the Delegates in Congress to enact Laws.<sup>4</sup>

MS (Nc-Ar). In the hand of Thomas Burke and endorsed by him: "Some Notes on the articles of Confederation while in Congress."

<sup>1</sup> Although Burnett printed these undated notes under the date November 15, 1777, it is clear from internal evidence that Burke actually wrote them at least a month later. The notes consist of Burke's remarks on the final text of the Articles of Confederation, which Congress approved and ordered to be printed for distribution to the states on November 15, about a month after Burke had left York to return to North Carolina. Gov. Richard Caswell transmitted a printed copy of this version of the Confederation to the North Carolina Assembly on December 16, which was probably when Burke, then serving in the lower house of the assembly, saw the document for the first time. Committees from both houses were chosen on December 18 to consider the Confederation, and the next day a report was submitted and later approved by the assembly calling for ratification of some articles and continued study of others. Interestingly enough, the articles recommended for approval were precisely those Burke raised no objections to in these notes. Burke was a member of the lower house committee dealing with the Confederation and presumably prepared the notes around December 18 for the use of the assembly. The assembly eventually decided on April 24, 1778, to authorize the North Carolina delegates to ratify all the articles of the Confederation. See *JCC*, 9:907-28; *N.C. State Records*, 12:221, 229, 263, 393, 400, 449, 599, 608, 695, 708, 717; and Burnett, *Letters*, 2:552 note.

<sup>2</sup> There is no mention in the journals of a Connecticut "provision" to Article 7, which dealt with the right of state governments to appoint officers for state troops. There is in *JCC*, 9:927-28, a "Motion from Connecticut" respecting Congress' appeal jurisdiction in disputes between states under Article 9, but this motion was not included in the printed text of the Confederation sent to the states. See *JCC*, 9:913, 916-18, 927-28; and Evans, *Am. Bibliography*, nos. 15619-27.

<sup>3</sup> Not until more than a month after Burke had left Congress and returned to North Carolina was the section of the Confederation enumerating the powers of Congress changed from Article 14 to Article 9. *JCC*, 9:915-23.

<sup>4</sup> For other, considerably later remarks by Burke on the Confederation, see Thomas Burke's Observations on the Articles of Confederation, October 31, 1779.

## James Lovell to Richard Henry Lee

Dear Sir

18 Decr. [1777]

A Packet arriving this Week directed to the Committee of Correspondence, and containing only a Letter from Berlin for Congress,<sup>1</sup> I took the freedom of opening one directed to our worthy Friend S Adams in yr. Brother A's handwriting, of which I send you a copy so far as was material to the Public.

Paris July 31st

"Journeys to the Courts of Spain & Berlin have satisfied me that the determined system of Europe is to let us struggle through this War as we can with the warmest Professions of Friendship, with the strongest declarations of their being interested in our success and therefore ardently wishing it. Nothing can move them from their quietism & caution which are carried to a perfectly ridiculous extreme. Spain is totally occupied with its little Portuguese War; France is governed by Timidity in the excess; and the 3 great northern Powers are immersed in schemes of plundering the Turk & the Pole, and dividing the spoil. In this situation of Europe, notwithstanding the justice of our cause has rendered all men in our favour, it is not wonderful that you are left, like Hercules in his cradle, to strangle the Serpent that is the terroure of Europe.

"In this Situation it is happy for us that the extravagance of the enterprise has already so exhausted the means of our Enemies that, it is certain, this is the last campaign of vigour they can make against us.

"When our point is secured by the energy of our own exertions, we shall think it happy that the fears & occupations of the powers of Europe have prevented them from forming treaties with us, when our situation would have given them infinite advantages.

"When our distresses are past & our fears subsided, we shall be enabled to see & to follow our interests in the alliances we form; which I do not think would be intirely the case at present."

Besides this public matter of your Brother's letter he adds a Note. "A Mr. Carmichael obtained from me a letter to you under a pretence of his going immediately to America. I have since found him to be a very unworthy person, whom I can by no means recommend to your patronage." You will see more sentiments of this kind written to Coll. Francis. I wish these hints had come before our late Action of Mr. C——.<sup>2</sup>

One of Monticu's Vessels has arrived at Portsmouth with the following articles for the Continental Account.

48 Brass 4 Pounders with Carriages compleat  
19 9 Inch mortars



2500 Bombs—9 Inch  
 2000 4 Pound shot  
 A large Quantity of intrenching tools  
 3000 Fuses  
 1110 Do. for Dragoons  
 about 18000 lbs Gun Powder  
 61051 lbs Brimstone

Beaumarchais's Secretary Francy<sup>3</sup> is arrived at Portsmouth & is expected here daily; perhaps he will bring letters from the Gentlemen at Paris to our Committee, but they cannot be later than Sept. Mr. Geary has one dated Nantes the 5th of that month, which speaks of the cowardly disposition of the French Court. I do not count this an absolute contradiction of Bingham's letter of Octr. 13th because a Gentleman from America trading at Nantes Sepr 5th might be a Stranger to ministerial measures entered into time enough to reach Mr. B thro' the General of Martinique by Octr. 13th. However, Sir, tho' I attempt to reconcile these accounts so as to make the Story of war stand, yet I am very far from being sanguine in the belief of it. Your Brothers history of the Temper of the several Courts seems by far the most natural of any other which has come to hand.<sup>4</sup>

I expect we shall have an enormous mercantile account from De Francy, I suppose it is the House of Hortales which your Brother Wm. hints his fears about. You see how necessary his presence was near Mr. D.<sup>5</sup> A letter from this same Gentleman to Mr. Morris came open to Mr. Hancock but the letter covering appeared to be private, so that the inclosed was sent on to Mr. M without Congress coming to the Knowledge of the Contents.<sup>6</sup>

RC (PPAmP). In Lovell's hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Lee's June 11, 1777, letter to the Committee of Secret Correspondence, endorsed "Recd. Decr. 16th. 1777," is in PCC, item 83, fols. 71-74, and Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:335-36.

<sup>2</sup> On November 28 William Carmichael had been elected secretary to the commissioners at Paris. *JCC*, 9:975. See also Lovell to John Adams, February 10, 1778, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Jean Baptiste Lazarus Thévèneau de Francy (d. 1783), who arrived in York in February 1778 to settle the accounts of Hortalez & Co. and to act as Caron de Beaumarchais' resident agent in the United States. See Committee of Commerce to Robert Morris, February 21, 1778, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Lovell's doubts about the intentions of France were confirmed later this month. See Lovell to Lee, December 28, 1777.

<sup>5</sup> That is, Silas Deane.

<sup>6</sup> Silas Deane's September 23 and October 1, 1777, letters to Robert Morris, with several enclosures, are in *NYHS Collections* 20 (1887): 145-63.



## William Ellery to Ezra Stiles

Dear Sir,

York Town Pennsylvania Decr. 19th. 1777.

I most sincerely wish it were in my power to advise you to such a Conduct as would most advance your happiness and the happiness of your family; but here I am at a Loss. If I could determin this point you should have my most hearty consent to embrace what should appear eligible. It would assist me much in forming a Judgment if I should know what Salary your present parish would give you to settle with them, and how you like the place and people. If the place & people should be as agreeable as at New Haven; and the Salary is not considerably less I think I should advise to your settling in Portsmouth. An hundred Dollars, in my mind, would weigh more than the Honour of Presidentship, and the Trouble I imagin of the Presidt of a College much exceeds that of a Minister, not to say any thing about the superior Expençe in Living of the former to the latter. I wish there were a Prospect of your Newport Flock ever returning, but alas! they are scatter'd up and down the Land like Sheep without a Shepherd, and it is probable that many of them will never return again to Newport. If I could foresee that in the course of a few years there would be enough of them collected to give you a comfortable support I should not hesitate to desire you not to accept the Presidency of Yale College, and to refuse settling at Portsmouth, or any where else, for I don't know any place where if you were family, could be comfortably subsisted, you would be so happy as at Newport; and I am perswaded that the Second Congregation in Newport will never find a Minister whom they will so universally love and respect as Dr. Stiles; but this is so improbable that in considering the subject of your Election it ought not to weigh much.<sup>1</sup> I dont remember that I ever receivd the Letter you wrote to me from Mr Marchants respecting this Matter. If I had ever received it I think I should have answered it. I wrote you a Letter sometime since<sup>2</sup> in which I said something humorously regarding your future return to Newport; but tho' humorously said it had, as sometimes my funny speeches have, a very serious meaning. I think, may it please your reverence, that if you could take a rich Wife at Portsmouth and could make it in your Bargain that She should go with you to Newport, when Peace and Independency shall be established, it might settle this knotty business. Most ardently wishing you in this and in all your Ways infinitely better direction than the wisest of Mortals can give, or even your own uninspired Wisdom can suggest I continue to be with the sincerest Regard for you and your family,

Dr Sir, yrs most affectionately, Wm Ellery

[P.S.] The Enemy's Army have been out twice from the City lately, the first time with a determination to attack our Army it was said;

but it seems it was so advantageously posted as to defeat their Intention. The second Time they crossed the Schuylkil, advanced up the west Side as far as Maddisons ford (about 12 miles above the City) and after collecting a considerable quantity of forage returned. The last Time we had any Intelligence from G.W. he was at The Gulph Mill, about 12 miles on the Lancaster road, & by this I suppose he is at Wilmington where it is said he proposed to quarter for the Winter. If he should quarter there it "may be attended with I know not what pernicious Consequences."

Decr. 21st. Lt Col. Barton who arrived in Town this Evening from the Army says that they intend to hut this Winter at Valley forge which I believe is about 20 miles from Philadelphia and a few miles West of the Schuylkil.

I write by this Opportunity to Genl. Whipple and have given him more particular Intelligence than I had Time to communicate to you. Please to be referred to him.

W E

RC (CtY).

<sup>1</sup> Although the corporation of Yale had elected Stiles president of the college in September 1777, he did not accept the office until March 1778. Edmund S. Morgan, *The Gentle Puritan: A Life of Ezra Stiles, 1727-1795* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962), chap. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

## Robert Morris to the Marine Committee

Sir Manheim Decr. 19th. 1777

The enclosed letter <sup>1</sup> came here yesterday and I believe was meant not only to obtain my opinion on the Subject it relates to, but also for me to introduce it to the Marine Commee.

I saw Capt Barry at Camp and he wanted to Relate to me the Substance of his dispute with the Navy Board, but I had neither time or inclination, neither did I think it proper to hear one Story without the other as it was probable I might some day become a judge in the affair.

I shall therefore only add that Capt Barry thinks himself capable of making a defence against the accusation of the Board and Submitting the matter entirely to the deliberation of the Committee.<sup>2</sup> I remain Respectfully, Sir, Your Obedt. hble servt.

Robt Morris

RC (DNA: PCC, item 137).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> As a result of the Middle Department Navy Board's complaint about the "disrespect and ill treatment" it had received from Capt. John Barry, Congress resolved on December 30 that Barry "attend Congress, to answer to the complaint exhibited against him." Barry defended his conduct in a letter of

January 10, 1778, which apparently impressed a majority of delegates because on January 29 Congress rejected a motion not to employ him "till further orders of Congress." See *JCC*, 9:1040, 1066-67, 10:44, 99.

## Jonathan Bayard Smith to George Bryan

Dr. Sir

York Town Decr. 19 1777

Congress yesterday recd. acct. of the arrival of a Ship from France in 75 days with 48 Cannon, 19 mortars 9 Inch, 61,000 wt. of Brimstone, near 4000 small arms, some powder &c. We have no papers by this Vessell. Genl. Gates has answered some queries proposed by Congress respectg. Burgoynes conduct in the Convention. He says the military chest & standards were left in Canada. He accounts for the arms unfit for service in the return & the want of scabbards for bayonets & of Cartouch boxes &c. & concludes that things have been conducted tolerably well.

I wish to have the result of Colo. Bayard & Mr. Youngs business at Camp.<sup>1</sup> I have not a copy of the resolution of the house on the quorum of their delegates.<sup>2</sup> The memorial of the house & Council was laid before Congress the Evng. I arrived here & read. It was again read yesterday & will probably be considered this day.<sup>3</sup> I believe Congress will not wish our army to be any considerable distance from Pha. But havg. been very unwell yesterday I could only crawl to Congress, & have not been able to visit many of the members.

I expect to write to you again in a day or two. Yrs. &c &c.

J B Smith

[P.S.] Yesterday recd. a exact return of Burgoynes army at the time of surrenderg. You'l see it in the next paper.

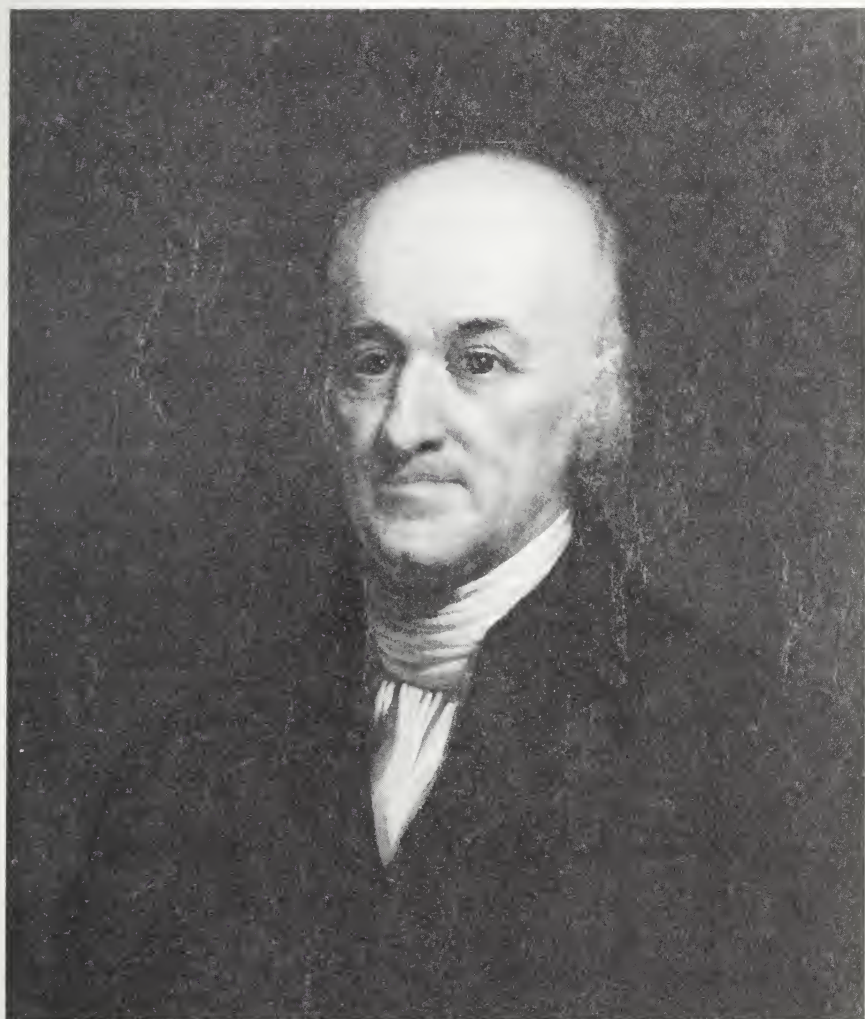
RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> The letters of James Young and Col. John Bayard to President Thomas Wharton pertaining to their efforts to appraise the condition of the clothing of Pennsylvania's Continental troops are in *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:61-62, 75-76.

<sup>2</sup> The Pennsylvania Assembly's resolution of December 13 appointing a new slate of delegates to Congress was silent on the point of a quorum requirement, but on several occasions since early October a single delegate had cast the state's vote on recorded roll call votes. See *JCC*, 9:762, 765, 771, 780, 787, 807, 843, 849, 853, 1010, 1027-28.

<sup>3</sup> Although officials had little more than rumors to go on, both the Pennsylvania Assembly and Council were concerned that General Washington's selection of winter quarters would leave the eastern part of the state unnecessarily exposed to British depredations and foraging parties. Therefore when it appeared to them that the main Continental Army would be cantoned west of the Schuylkill, a joint session of the two bodies was held on December 15 to protest the anticipated move. Their "remonstrance" was presented to Congress on the 17th and debated the next two days, whereupon Congress resolved to transmit a copy of it to Washington with the query "whether he has come to a fixed resolution to canton the army; and if he has, what line of cantonment





Jonathan Bayard Smith

he has proposed." See *JCC*, 9:1033-36; *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:104-5; and *Pa. Council Minutes*, 11:386.

As Washington had already moved his headquarters to Valley Forge before President Laurens' December 20 letter enclosing this resolve reached him, he merely responded with an explanation of the choices he believed had been open to him, although he could not in a subsequent letter resist contrasting the distress troops experienced sleeping "under frost and Snow without Cloaths or Blankets" with the condition of gentlemen drawing "remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fire." Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:186-88, 196.

## Jonathan Bayard Smith to George Bryan

Dr Sir,

York Town, Decr. 19th, 1777.

This day the memorial from our State concerning the cantonment of the regular army was taken into consideration. Congress had some time ago, by a Committee, recommended to Genl. Washington, if he determined to take winter quarters, to dispose of his army in such manner as would most effectually cover the Country, &c. They have now ordered the memorial of our State to be transmitted to the Genl, & have desired him to inform Congress whether he is about to canton his troops, & where, & what provision he has made for securing the East side of Schuylkill & the State of N. Jersey. This you will be pleased to communicate to the Gentlemen of both houses for their present satisfaction. A copy of the resolution I have not time by this opportunity to forward, but suppose it will be sent more formally by our delegates by the next opportunity that may offer.

We hear that the army are about putting in the Gulph valley. This is the wish of Congress as far as I can judge.

I am, Dr Sir, Yr afft & v. h. st,

J. B. Smith.

MS not found; reprinted from *Pa. Archives*, 6:109. Addressed: "To Honble George Bryan, Esq., Vice President of the State of Pennsylvania, Lancaster."

## Abraham Clark to William Alexander

My Lord,

York Town Decr. 20. 1777.

We have been much alarmed by a report that the Army was going into Winter quarters on and about Wilmington, thereby leaving New Jersey and a great part of Pennsa. entirely open to the Enemy. This Supposed measure produced several Resolutions of Congress, which, with a Remonstrance on that Subject from the Legislature of Pennsa. are forwarded to the Commander in Chief requesting his particular Attention to the Security of New Jersey &c. We had before Congress the Opinions of the General officers respecting proper places for Cantoning the Army, and with great pleasure find you in favour of the Valley near Schuylkill, which in the judgement of all

or most I have met with is the only place for defending the Country and preventing Supplies to the Enemy, as the Army at Wilmington would leave great part of Pennsa. and Jersey greatly exposed to the Enemy's Ravages, the Shipping up Delaware would be lost, and all the extensive Salt works in Jersey destroyed, and not unlikely a general defection take place in this State, and many parts of Jersey, and Supplies for the Army from the Eastern States greatly Obstructed. It is now said the Army are Sitting down in the Valley which I heartily wish may be true.

Many have long depended upon the interference of France in our favour, they indeed Supply us with many necessaries, but no certain prospect opens of their declaring war. Their timid court are unable to shake of a Dread of Great Britain, they wish us well but dare not openly espouse our Cause. Spain is so intirely taken up with her Portugal affairs, that She has almost forgotten us. Austria, Prussia & Russia are all seeking their own interest, and Meditating a Division of the Turkish Dominions, and but little regard the Dispute between us and Great Britain. Our Enemies are busy in Supplicating Supplies from Germany from whence she may draw a small reinforcement, but must principally depend upon their own Subjects. We also must depend upon our own force relying upon the blessing of Heaven for Success. France & Spain appear to have some thing important in view by sending troops to the West Indies, but their designs are wholly unknown to us and perhaps undetermined by them.

A Ship from France lately Arrived at Portsmouth in New Hampshire with 48 brass field pieces four pounders with Carriages Complete, 19 Nine Inch Mortars with Shells, Cannon Shot, small Arms, Powder, & Sulphur. We have a prospect of soon having in our power a full Supply of Cloathing for the Army.

We have no late News from France, I have given the Substance of the latest. I am My Lord, Your Obedt Humble Servt.

Abra. Clark

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Jonathan Bayard Smith's first letter to George Bryan of December 19, 1777, note 3.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir,

York. 20th December [1777]

I had the honour of receiving the day before yesterday by the hand of Major Du Bouchet your favor of the 3d Inst. together with the Papers referred to,<sup>1</sup> these were Reported to Congress yesterday Morning, but I am not charged with any consecutive order, probably this silence arises from the constant expectation of your arrival in York Town.



Inclosed in this you will receive Certified Copy of an Act of Congress of yesterday's date restricting the Supplies of provision & other necessities for the use of British Prisoners, to articles in Specie & quality, or to Gold & Silver in discharge of the Amount of such provision & other necessities as our Commissaries have Supplied or may hereafter Supply them with, introduced by reasons which have [at] length urged Congress to the present determination.<sup>2</sup> I beg leave Sir, to refer you to the paper & to repeat that I am with Sincere Respect & attachment &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "General Gates or the Commanding Officer in the Northern department, Albany. By Browne to Gov. Clinton."

<sup>1</sup> These letters and papers are listed in *JCC*, 9:1034.

<sup>2</sup> Congress adopted this policy because of General Howe's refusal to accept Continental currency in payment for provisions for American prisoners in British custody. *JCC*, 9:1036-37.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir,

York 20th December. 1777.

From the Morning of the 9th Inst. to this minute I have been close prisoner to the Gout, much the greatest part of the intermediate time, in very great pain & at this Instant unable to put a foot to the floor, Sitting in Bed & writing in the most awkward positions from Morning to Night. For these reasons forgive me, Noble Marquis, for barely acknowledging the Receipt of your favor of the 14th Inst.<sup>1</sup> Be assured Sir, I will pay that regard which is due to your Commands as soon as it shall please the superintendent of Gouts to discharge me from the present Billet.

I have the honour of inclosing you a Small packet which I hope is from France because it came to my hands with other Letters from thence, Via Boston.

If Sir, you incline to write by Mr. Adams be assured your own Commands will be a sufficient introduction, he well knows your Style & title & I am sure he reveres your Character & Merits. The addition of a Line recommending him to the countenance of your Noble freinds in France will not only lay him under great obligations, but be a means of enabling him to be more serviceable in his ambassadorial capacity & consequently be serving the general cause of these States.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honour to be, Noble Sir, Your obliged & most obedient humble Servt.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> This letter is in Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:183-87.

<sup>2</sup> For letters of recommendation in behalf of John Adams that Lafayette wrote to relatives in France, see *ibid.*, pp. 194, 198.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear son,

York Town 20th December 1777

I believe it was on the 17th when I last wrote to you by Jones.<sup>1</sup> James then brought in a pair of Boots which that Messenger took charge of.

I beg you will present me in the most respectful terms to Marquis delafayette & deliver—No, pained as I am, I will write him two or three Lines.

I am still in Bed—perhaps because I would not be still there. An exertion yesterday produced me a miserable Night & threw me back I know not how long & the great Crime I committed was no more than sitting on the Bed side & hanging the legs & feet down. I am determined to keep them horizontal & warm all this day & to Morrow. Perhaps some strength may return on Monday.

Chevalier Faléye who speaks less English than I do French, told me a long unintelligible Tale of the surprize of Potter's Militia & the situation of the American & British Army & that you promised to send me an account very special. Mr. Rutledge so particularly requests me to inform him of all our proceedings, I am always anxious for proper materials which you alone supply me with.

A very alarming & dangerous discord has appeared between the Navy Board & the Naval Commanders at Burdowntown, have you heard any thing of it? I have sent such advices as came this morning to My hands to our Marine Committee & strongly recommended their immediate interposition.<sup>2</sup> Our Machine Politic has been long neglected in many vital parts by those whose peculiar Duty it was to have kept it in perfect Order. The Stony, deep & steep passages which it is yet to be dragged over, threaten a complete Crash. Nothing will save it, but the utmost vigilance & Resolution of a few, perhaps of *one* in particular whose Shoulders have been long & honestly at the *Wheel*, &ca. That one, I am sure has been & at this moment is much deceived in his dependence upon the K— *Naves*. I wish I had more time & strength to enter deeply with you on this subject. You are one of those, who are honestly running head long, hazarding life & forfeiting the sweets of domestic life—duped by a parcel of fellows who are picking our Pockets & who for pelf I verily beleive woud sell us to morrow. Indeed my Dear Child I have ground to suspect that we are at auction this very Moment. How thankful am I that I was persuaded by Love of Country to come here. I have seen with my Eyes—I have heard with my Ears—one Man in whom the *one* above meant I beleive puts great confidence curses the hour I came—others there are of quite different sentiments.

You tell me nothing from Your last Letters from London relative to Harry, Your Sister, Uncle, Aunt or our friends in St. Mary's Axe. Receive back Mr Izard's & Mr. Black's Letters, also receive a

Copy of one which since came open to me from Mr Izard, who supposed you had been at Charles Town.

I have a project in my mind for bringing our whole families to Philadelphia or New York before the end of April, from thence I think we could easily get them further in land. I only want the Clever fellow to send on the embassy, I would mean to obtain passports for them from Authority on the other side. I know it practicable with respect to Women & Children—if my Brother chose to come I have no doubt he might from his disposition & Indisposition be included. I begin to be distressed on Account of my Children & 'tis highly necessary you & I should bestow one moments thought on a Lady who otherwise may find herself even in Charles Town cast on a forlorn Shore.

My Dear Son I pray God protect You. Henry Laurens

RC (MHi: William Gilmore Simms Collection deposit, 1973).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens' last known extant letter to his son John was written on November 30.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Morris to the Marine Committee, December 19, 1777, note 2.

## Henry Laurens to Philip Schuyler

Sir,

York 20th December. 1777

About this day Sennight your favour of the 28th Ultio. covering Letters directed to Mr. Duane & Mr Duer came to hand, I Sent both the Letters immediately to the last named Gentleman.

I reserve the honour of presenting your Letter to Congress when I shall be able to attend the House. At present I am closely confined by the Gout in both feet, but hope to get abroad before Christmas day. I mean Sir, by this delay to quicken the business which you press, by intimating to Congress from the retiring of Mr. Adams & Mr. Lee, the necessity for nominating a new Committee, for inquiring into the cause of the loss of Tyconderoga &ca & at the same time producing all the papers which in the course of our past enquiry have been lodged in my hands.<sup>1</sup> These by a very few hours attention may be properly digested & if Gentlemen are of my opinion that there is no ground for expecting further important information a Report may presently follow. I beg you will beleive me to be with very great Respect & Esteem &ca

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Congress read General Schuyler's November 28 letter on December 26 and promptly added three new members to the committee "to enquire into the causes of the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence." *JCC*, 9:1053. For this letter, in which Schuyler asked Congress to expedite its investigation of this affair, see PCC, item 153, 3:256, item 170, 2:222.



## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir, York 20th December 1777  
The 17th Inst. I troubled your Excellency by the hand of Messenger Jones.

Under this Cover your Excellency will receive two Acts of Congress of yesterday's date respectively, one for regulating & restricting the terms of payment for past unliquidated & future supplies of provisions & other necessities for British Prisoners.

The other requesting Your Excellency to inform Congress the intended disposition of the Army, if it be determined to withdraw from encampment, & strongly recommending the State of New Jersey as an object demanding attention & protection—together with a Remonstrance to Congress from the Council & General Assembly of Pennsylvania, upon which is founded the first Clause of the last mentioned Act.<sup>1</sup> To the above I shall add a Resolve of the 8th alluded to in my Letter of that date which has been ever Since lying on my Table from an opinion which I had entertained that a subsequent Resolve would have been coupled to it, but no such, nor any relative to the Subject, has been Sent to me.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honour to be with great respect & Esteem.

P.S. Just as I was about closing this packet I received one from General Parsons containing a very Interesting correspondence with Sir Willm. Tyron,<sup>3</sup> Congress being convened I could not with propriety detain the papers even for an attentive perusal. From a Cursory reading, I remember Sir William after justifying certain wanton acts of conflagration & of Cruelty & base Insult upon some of the friends of the American cause which had been complained of by our General, says he has "offered twenty Dollars per Man" as a præmium for taking up & delivering Committee Men—an Alarm, which indicates drawing the Scene & disclosing the last Act in the horrors of Civil War.

Sir William's inclination is however *disclosed*, & his petulance has furnished a Key to certain ambiguous terms contained in a late letter to your Excellency from Sir William Howe.<sup>4</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See Jonathan Bayard Smith's first letter to George Bryan of December 19, 1777, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> The December 8 resolve in question concerned General Howe's response to charges of mistreating American prisoners of war. *JCC*, 9:1009.

<sup>3</sup> See Laurens to Samuel H. Parsons, December 23, 1777.

<sup>4</sup> In the previous month Washington had transmitted to Congress letters from General Howe relating to prisoner exchanges dated November 6, 9, and 24. Washington Papers, DLC; and *JCC*, 9:970, 982.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir

York Decr. 20th. [1777]

With some other papers I send you the Copy of a Copy of one of Genl. Burgoyne's letters to Genl. Gates, which is not only interesting to our State in particular, but to the general Cause of the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The Returns which had been made to us of Artillery &c taken from the Enemy had induced us to make several Queries to Genl. Gates respecting the Standards, Cartouch Boxes, Bayonets &c which appeared to have been destroyed. Genl. Gates tells us that upon Burgoyne's Word of Honor the Standards were left in Canada, and that the other suspicious Appearances sprang from the Conduct of our own People & certain Necessities, but not from any Breach of the Convention by the Will of Genl. Burgoyne or his Officers. Our Friend Gates is disposed to make the best of every Thing. Others in that Quarter of the World are found who wish to make the worst. Nor is it in that Quarter only, I assure you. Indeed, for my own part I begin to have the strongest Suspicions of Messrs. Howe & Burgoyne's Intention to slight the Tye of the Articles settled at Saratoga. Howe is totally above regarding his own Promises. He wrote to Genl. Washington that an Officer not above the rank of a Commissary or Quartermaster might go into Philada. to view the State of the Prisoners; yet he refused to admit Mr. Boudinot when he went with a Flag for the Purpose. Burgoyne says the public Faith is broken; and at the same time he is asking Genl. Washington or Congress, *thro him*, to let the Embarkation for Europe be from R. Island, at least, so far as regards himself, if it is not permitted for the whole. Is it not very suspicious that both Howe and Burgoyne feel quite at ease about any Promises made to persons of such Character as they openly affix to the Americans?

You have doubtless e'er this been made acquainted with G. Burgoyne's critical Disposition in regard to the descriptive List of his men which was to have been taken by Genl. Heath's order. For this and other similar pride it was thought proper to take hold of Mr. Burgoyne's manner of asking a Favour of Congress thro one of its Officers: In consequence, the following Resolve was passed the 17th.<sup>2</sup>

Resolved That Genl. Washington be directed to inform Genl. Burgoyne the Congress will not receive nor consider any Proposition for Indulgence of altering the terms of the Convention of Saratoga unless immediately directed to their own Body.

With a Degree of the Arts of our Enemies this Resolve is penned to lead Burgoyne into direct Petition to Congress, tho it does not give an absolute Promise to grant his Petition. You will find in some of my attendant slovenly scrawls so much encouragement to expect from me Intelligence about our *grand* Army upon the Return of the

Committee, that I do not know how to avoid saying something about it, now, though 'tis a Subject very sickening to even a strong Stomach.

The Majority of the Officers were fixt & determined against a Winter Campaign, and the Nakedness of the Soldiers furnished such abundant Argument to their Leaders, that the Committee could not recommend anything better than a Cantonment which would best tend to cover the Country and accommodate the army.

It was evident, among Friends I say it, that our Army was not inclined to fight Howe when he gave them 4 days opportunity. The Committee therefore could not give it as their Opinion to the General that he ought, with that same Army, to force the Lines of the Enemy, or attempt the City by the Schuylkill. In short, unless we secure Half pay to officers and Pensions to their Widows and make their Commissions vendible, *severe* Discipline in respect to officers cannot be introduced, and consequently *none at all* in respect to Soldiers. But the General does swear that, if the Commissions are made desirable, he will cashier without favour or affection till the Army becomes vigorous. In this hope we breathe this day; but verily my own Share of Hope is not great enough on this Promise as to make me relinquish the Idea of an annual Choice of *all* officers.

The Report of Genl. W's Intention to canton near Willmington has brought a Remonstrance from this State to us, and I momentarily expect another from the Jersies: The latter State will feel Howes vindictive Hand, if left exposed this winter. Their brave Militia have given him peculiar provocation and the Submission of some of the People to receive his Protections last year have proved but a temporary loyalty will excite his bitterest Malice.

This State is now become truly alarmed and ready to make the greatest Exertions, but tis too late to save a great Part from a severe scourging. But I drop these matters and close by urging you to work manibus pedibus for the down fall of Extortioners, that the wives & children of both Officers & men in the army may not be starved to death in their Absence.

RC (NN). In Lovell's hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> Lovell sent Adams a copy of John Burgoyne's November 14 letter to Horatio Gates, which was read in Congress on December 18. *JCC*, 9:1034. Adams' copy is in the Adams Papers, NN.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 9:1032.

## Marine Committee to Patrick Henry

Sir

December 20th. 1777

There has lately arrived in New Hampshire a French ship with a large quantity of Brass Cannon and Military Stores for the United



States. The Gentleman who has the direction of the said Vessel has informed Congress that he expects a frigate of 54 Guns with a large Cargo of Cloth part of which is the property of a Company of Merchants in France and the other part we imagine is upon Continental Account, will arrive about this time in Virginia. As it is of great importance to America to encourage a Commerce of this Sort, and to prevent the said frigate from being taken by the British men of war, The Marine Committee have thought it adviseable to give your Excellency this information, referring to your Judgment the propriety of employing one or more fast sailing boats the fidelity of whose hands you can best depend on, to keep a Look out in such manner as you may think best calculated to give the earliest intelligence to the French Frigate of the situation of the British Men of war. We have no doubt of your taking every precaution to prevent this matter from being made public and also of giving such directions as may answer the above design. We have the honor to be with great respect, Your Excellencys, Most obedt servants <sup>1</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> President Laurens also wrote a brief letter this day of Governor Henry transmitting an "Act of Congress of the 15th Inst. Certifying the appointment of George Clymer Esquire to be a Commissioner on Indian affairs in place of Colonel Reed who had declined the service." PCC, item 13, fol. 63; and JCC, 9:1026.

## Marine Committee to James Nicholson

Sir

December 20th 1777

Since writing the annexed Letter <sup>1</sup> we have received advice that a large French Ship of 54 Guns ladened with Clothing may be daily expected into Virginia. We think proper to communicate this intelligence to you that should you see this ship and fall in with her any where in the Bay or on the Coast, you will give the Captain of her full intelligence of the strength and situation of the enemies Ships of war in the Bay and advise him what measures are best to pursue. This we request you will do and that you will keep what we now write you a profound secret from all persons.

We are Sir, Your hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> The Marine Committee had written the following note to Nicholson the previous day: "It being suggested to this Committee that some Tobacco might be shipped on board the Virginia without much inconvenience, we now direct that you receive from the Agent of the Commercial Committee as much of that article as you can carry so as not to incommode the sailing or fighting of your ship and that you follow the directions of the said Committee in the delivery of the said Tobacco." Paullin, *Marine Committee Letters*, 1:186.



## William Ellery to William Whipple

Dear Sir

[December 21, 1777]<sup>1</sup>

Your letter was so agreeable that when I read it I should have ceased to think that you ought to have answered mine sooner if you had not apologized for omitting it so long. When I read the Convention I was so disappointed that I was disposed to criticize every part of it and to ask many questions which at another time perhaps I should not have done. At that time I did not know so well the situation of affairs on the North River nor that of our army. I am better reconciled to it now than I was, and was I sure the enemy would preserve their public faith should be satisfied.<sup>2</sup> The reason I asked you why Ticonderoga and Mount Independence were not included in the Convention of Saratoga was because I thought those places were garrisoned by soldiers under the command of Burgoyne. The question on the word *contest* is wittily answered. The question on the word *post* was occasioned by a misprint in the newspaper I read. Instead of British *post* it was *port*. General Gates hath returned the number of the enemy at the time of the Convention, but not an account of their losses since the time they crossed the Lakes; nor our loss from time to time and the number of our troops Continental and Militia at the surrendry. I am sorry to find the Commissary's and Quarter Master's departments in such disorder. I expected Confusion in the former from the plan; the latter would have been less confused if Genl Mifflin had not by an ill state of health, been obliged to resign the office of Quarter Master General. He is greatly recovered and is now appointed a Member of a new constituted Board of War, of which General Gates is appointed President; the other members are Cols Trumbull (the late Commissary General) Pickering and Mr Richard Peters. Genl Gates still retains his rank of Major General and may be ordered into the field when Congress shall think necessary. When this Board meets it is expected that they will rectify the errors & disorders in those departments, and put every thing in the Army within their sphere on a better foot than they at present stand. General Conway is appointed an Inspector General of the Army with the rank and pay of Major General. The duties of this office it would be impertinent to point out to *General Whipple*. I am in hopes that the measures adopted and adopting will enable our army to take the field early in the Spring under great advantages. Genl Howe with his whole force moved out of Philadelphia the fourth instant with an intent as he had given out, to attack our army and drive it beyond the mountains; but after marching, counter-marching & manoeuvring several days with a view of drawing General Washington from his strongholds they returned in again. On the eleventh our Army marched from their old encampment, and intended to pass the Schuylkill at Madison's ford, about

12, or 13 miles from Philadelphia where a bridge had been laid across the river. When the first & part of the 2d division had passed, they found a body of 4000 under the command of Lord Cornwallis possessed of the heights. Our troops were obliged to repass and were prevented getting over until the succeeding night. This manoeuvre on the part of the enemy was not in consequence of any information they had of our motions, but was designed to secure the pass while they were foraging in the neighboring country. They were met in their advances by General Potter with part of the Pennsylvania militia who behaved with bravery and gave them every possible opposition, until they were obliged to retreat from their superior numbers. Cornwallis collected a good deal of forage and returned to the City the night our army passed the river. No discrimination marked his proceedings. All property whether friend's or foes that came in their way was seized and carried off. Our Army by the last accounts was near the Gulph Mill, about as I am told, 12 or 13 miles West of Schuylkill on the Lancaster Road—where they intend to winter I know not. I wish there was the same spirit in the main army as displayed itself to the Northward and that the militia in this state were animated with that ardor which blazed forth in the Sons of Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut on the banks of Hudson; then our harrassed troops might winter gloriously in Philadelphia; but alas!

Our soldiers in the hands of the enemy at Philadelphia and New York, especially in the former, are treated in a most barbarous manner and a number of them have perished with famine. Some of them have died in the State house yard with grass in their mouths as I have been informed different ways. How long shall we forbear to retaliate on those worse than savages! On application from General Washington, Sir Wm Howe consented that he should send in an officer to see how our soldiers were treated whereupon one was sent to the City, but Sir Wm denied him admission saying that he need not give himself any concern about the prisoners, that he would take care of them, I believe we shall take care how Sir Wm's commissaries of prisoners are allowed to go about the States providing for and taking care of the prisoners in our hands. Congress have passed a resolve that all their supplies shall be paid for in gold and silver in *solid coin*.

About 100 of the enemy from New York under the cover of a dark night not long since set fire to several houses in Philip's Manor within about four miles of General Parson's encampment, seized their inhabitants, stripped them naked both men & women and led them with halters round their necks in hellish triumph to New York. Genl Parsons remonstrated in a firm manly tone to Govr General Tryon on this occasion and was answered by him in an insolent haughty letter vindicating his barbarity and threatening destruction

against the rebels as he had the impudence to call us especially against Committee men. One of the houses that were burnt by his order belonged to a Committee man. General Parsons replied by setting fire to General Delancey's fine seat within the enemy's lines & about five miles of the City which utterly consumed it with all it's valuable furniture. Among the prisoners we have made in that quarter is Mr James Delancey who was taken in Maurisania and who went over to the enemy since the Declaration of Independency. Congress have ordered him to be delivered over to the Executive Order of New York to be dealt with as to Law shall appertain. Col Rollins who was taken in Fort Washington, Lt Col Livingston at Fort Montgomery and Major Stewart at Staten Island lately made their escape from a guardship on board of which they had been but a few days before confined. Col Rollins who hath been before Congress confirmed the account we have had of the cruel treatment our officers & Soldiers had rec'd at New York, says that while the officers were on their parole at Long Island they were billeted on the inhabitants and fared pretty well. That they were all lately put on board guardship with what view he could not tell, nor can I, but I conjecture from the enemy's contracting and collecting their force towards a point in New York that they have sent all the reinforcement from thence they could spare to Sir Wm Howe and that under apprehensions of an attack from General Putnam they have drawn from Long Island a great part of the force they had there to support New York; in this case they would not choose to leave our officers on that Island. If my conjectures should be right it might be well to make an attack on New York this winter, or at least an expedition to Long Island. It is necessary to have some expedition or other on foot constantly not only to keep our enemies in perpetual alarm but to engage & employ the minds of the people, which might otherwise by brooding over the calamities of War, become gloomy and indisposed to vigorous efforts. If any should be undertaken this winter I hope they will be better conducted than that against Rhode Island. Congress have appointed a Committee to enquire into the cause of the failure of that expedition of whom you are one. I hope that you will undertake and that your inquiry will be severe. Your old Captain Caleb Gardner entered upon that expedition as a volunteer with great spirit. I could wish that he might be summoned by the Committee. He can give you good information into the conduct of that affair and can tell you particularly why a descent was not made on the Island on Saturday night, the 18th of October last. There could not be a finer time for the purpose; and I was that day near Howland's ferry where I was well informed that all things were ready for an attack and that nothing was wanting but a favourable night. As I look upon this war, on our side to be a holy War, I can't conceive with submission to the righteous judgment of the Revd.



—— Hopkin's, who it seems was Chaplain and Counsellor to General Spencer why an attack might not have been made that night without violating the commandments of Heaven. But it seems that the holiness of Saturday night prevented an attempt being made.

By the best account I can get there is no prospect of a French War. We must fight our way to Independency alone. We should be abundantly competent for it, if we could be persuaded to stand forth as one man. Indeed as it is, notwithstanding the disaffection in this State and the want of civil power occasioned by the contests about a Constitution of Govt, the depreciation of our money, and the prevalence of avarice and extortion, We shall I don't doubt be able to struggle through the War. Such measures are taken to restore the credit of Continental money, and to check the lust of gain as I have reason to think will succeed. I am not at liberty to tell you on what I principally rely for the effecting the former. The measures recommended to the several States if gone into will effect the latter. Nothing but a severe scourging will bring the inhabitants of this State to their senses and I think between the two armies they will have enough of that. Congress are for pursuing spirited measures. Some recommendations they may give to the States may be thought inconsistent with the rights of individuals, but necessity and the accomplishment of the most noble intentions, will I hope in their opinion warrant what at another time and upon a less occasion might be thought unjustifiable. Virginia hath passed a Law to prevent monopolizing &c and to seize upon all woolens &c for sale fit for clothing our soldiers in the Continental Army, in consequence of which several seizures have been actually made in several parts of that country of the very articles they were in immediate want of to the amount of upwards of £20,000. If similar measures should be taken in every State, and a check could be given to sharpening, extortion and engrossing, we might easily clothe and victual our Army; and what ammunition and warlike stores we may reasonably expect from foreign parts; although we may not have reason to expect a War between France and Britain. For my own part although the war might be protracted, which I don't think would be the case if France should make war with Britain and although our public debt may be increased by our contending alone, yet I had rather that this should take place than that we should drag France into a war by entering into such treaties and laying ourselves under such obligations as might embarrass us and in the long run prove highly injurious to the United States of America. Britain has no prospects of reinforcements to her armies from Prussia, and it seems that Germany is sick of depopulating her States by selling her inhabitants to be sent into distant regions from whence but a few of them will ever return. Britain may perhaps draw some Roman Catholic recruits from Ireland and a few may be collected in Scotland, but with all she can any way collect I can't conceive that

she will be able to send into the field the next campaign an army equal to our's. Our naval force I hope the next Spring will be greater than it is at present, and that department better conducted. The Eastern Navy Board are empowered to suspend Officers<sup>3</sup> and I hope if what is said be true will suspend McNeal. I read the paragraph of your letter relating to Marine matters to the Marine Committee. They liked the hint; but you know that Committee. I wish you were here; that Committee particularly wants your services. Your military talents I am not acquainted with, but I know your ability in the Naval Department. It was this, that induced me as you may remember to solicit you to suffer yourself to be nominated one of the Navy Board in the Eastern Department. If you should not come again to Congress I hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you of that Board, when an opportunity shall offer for electing a member.

I have not heard a word lately about the fish I desired you to procure for me and my friends. Please to keep it in remembrance and whenever you can purchase them do not fail to do it.

Present my regards to Mr Stevens when you see him and to Capt John Flagg and any other inquiring friend at Portsmouth. Adieu Dear Sir, be happy and believe me to be, yours sincerely,

Wm Ellery

P.S. I am just this moment informed that our Army will hut this winter at Valley Forge about 20 miles from Philadelphia and near Schuylkill. The Rawleigh and Alfred are arrived in France & carried in two Jamaica vessels which sold for 9,000 Stg.

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> The evidence for dating this letter is located in Ellery's postscript of this date to his December 19 letter to Ezra Stiles. Therein he explained that "I write by this opportunity to Genl. Whipple," and reported the army's intention "to hut this Winter at Valley forge" in language nearly identical to that found in the postscript to the present letter.

<sup>2</sup> Ellery had discussed the Saratoga Convention in a letter he wrote to Whipple from South Kingstown, R.I., on October 30:

"I most heartily congratulate you on your signal Success at the Northward. You may say with the invincible Caesar *veni, vidi, vici*; for scarcely had you arrived at the northern Head Quarters, scarcely had you seen the Army of the Enemy before it surrender'd. Methinks I see you escorting in Triumph towards Boston John Burgoyne Esqr Lieutenant General of his Majesty's Armies in America, Colonel of the Queens regiment of Light-Dragoons, Governor of Fort William in North-Britain, one of the representatives of the Commons of Great-Britain, and late commanding an Army and Fleet employed on an Expedition from Canada &c at the head of Troops in the full powers of health, discipline and valour. Oh Lucifer how art thou fallen! How hath the northern 'menacing meteor after the most portentous glare evaporated into smoke or vanished into nothing.' Far greater Pomp distends your Breast, dear General than when accompanied by your Leathern Breeches maker, your Pedlar and your Servant you last Summer cross'd the Fish kill. But great as your Triumph may be I fancy it would have been still greater if you had escorted an Army

towards Boston which had been subdued by their fighting, and not surrendered by a too favorable Convention.

"I am afraid that Genl. Howe after he shall have received Burgoyne's Army, will land a Number of them for our dead that he cast out of the Dungeons of New York, and which he hath complained that Genl. Washington would not receive in Exchange for Prisoners in full health, or that by their being placed in British Garrisons abroad: the Soldiers who are now there may be sent over and employed against Us. It would have been much better to have killed one half of them in Battle and captivated the rest, than to have admitted a Surrendry on the Terms of the Convention. Why was not the Lieut. Col. of the Queens Regiment of Light Dragoons and Govr of Fort William in North-Britain compelled to surrender Ticonderoga and Mount-Independence? Why were such Expressions as the 'shortest route to the first *British Port* on Lake George' in the 9th Article, and the present *contest* in the 2d Article allowed? I consider myself as writing to a Friend who will pardon my being inquisitive, and not think me impertinent. I am and feel myself deeply interested in every Event of the War." Dreer Signers Collection, PHI.

<sup>3</sup> Congress had granted this power to the Eastern Navy Board on October 23. JCC, 9:833.

## Elbridge Gerry to Robert Morris

Dear Sir

York, Decr. 21. 1777.

I am favoured with yours of the 28th<sup>1</sup> with the inclosure, & fully agree with you, in the Necessity of introducing "A Spirit of Enterprize to our Army," & in order thereto, of encouraging every Instance of such a Disposition that we meet with. Colo. Barton proposed sending to Congress, a Petition expressing his Desires as set forth in General Green's Letter; I shall therefore wait a few Days in Expectation of an Opportunity of supporting the Petition with the Letter.<sup>2</sup> Nothing new at Congress excepting the arrival of a Vessel from Marseilles with a valuable Cargo, which is published in the papers. . . .<sup>3</sup> Your little son is well, but I have not been able to obtain a Visit from him on Account of his Modesty; his Uncle, with whom I had the pleasure of spending the last Evening, I find is in the same predicament. My compliments to your Lady & Family, not forgetting my little favorite Girl & believe me to be sir with much esteem your very hum Sert.

E. Gerry

Tr (DLC). Transcribed for Edmund C. Burnett from the original in the possession of Stan V. Henkels.

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps a copyist's error for "18th." No December letters from Morris to Gerry have been found, although the two men served together on the committee at headquarters at Whitemarsh at the beginning of the month.

<sup>2</sup> Lt. Col. William Barton, who had been presented a sword by Congress for his role in the capture of British Gen. Richard Prescott the previous summer, was promoted to colonel on December 24. See JCC, 8:580, 9:1050-51.

<sup>3</sup> Ellipsis in Tr.



## James Lovell to John Adams

21st. [December 1777]<sup>1</sup>

That you may excuse my vile manner of doing business, know that I freezing in my little room this morning so that I can scarcely hold my pen but, I am, here, in quiet.

The *sealed* packet sent before contained Triplicates of *Octr. 31st*, *Novr. 1 & 8* which last were only an Introduction of the Bearer Col. Ewen and an Annunciation of Mr. Laurens's Election as Presidt. so that his Draughts might be honoured.

I hope you will have copies made of what you have recd. in case several opportunities of sending offer. The distance from Boston & Portsmouth makes us lose many chances of sending from York.

RC (MHi). In Lovell's hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> Although Lovell wrote only "21st" to indicate the date of this letter, it seems clear that it was written in December. "The *sealed* packet sent before [containing] Triplicates of *Octr. 31st.*, *Novr. 1 & 8*" is a reference to enclosures that accompanied Lovell's letter to Adams of December 8, 1777.

## Francis Lightfoot Lee to Samuel Adams

My dear Sir,

York Town Decr. 22d. 1777

Tho. the times are dull, yet its so long since I had any converse with you, that I cant help asking how you do. Your time I suppose passes sweetly on, surrounded with all the delicacies of Boston, and uninterrupted with the rude alarms of War, but is not your happiness sometimes broke in upon by the spirit of extortion which rages in your City?

In the midst of my protesting & *swearing* that they were the most infamous, vile, execrable, extortionate villains in this State, of any in the whole world; that they woud soon effect what the British arms had in vain attempted; in pops a Letter from our Clothing Agent at Boston informing that it was impossible to procure any supplies, for that the *moderate* Merchts., & Whigs too! asked £20 for what cost one. Guess my surprize & concern: you who know my affection for your Country, will readily believe I wd. not give credit to it, 'till the Letter was read twice. How happens this my friend? is Joyce junr. no more?

To be serious, we are absolutely ruined, unless a remedy is found for this Evil. The Virginia Assembly is exerting itself. They have seized sufficient for their troops in the hands of Ingrossers, have passed a severe Law against them, & appointed a Comtee. of their body to hunt them out & prosecute. They have determined to fill up

their Regts. by drafts from the young men & have laid a heavier tax than I fear they will be able to bear. The monied wretches from the other States have polluted your City; drive them off, & purify your people. By Letters from my two brors. from France we have no reason to expect any of the burthen will be taken off our Shoulders by the powers of Europe. We do not want it if we will exert our own strength. The campaign in this quarter has to be sure been very disgracefull, but we have a great many men now inlisted tho scatter'd & disordered. I hope we shall find means to collect them & introduce some Æconomy & discipline; And if the States will draw the Reins of Governmt. a little tight, check the insatiable rage of avarice, & rouse their people from the present total inattention to public affairs; I make no doubt we shall put a glorious period to the contest the next campaign. Our enemy is not near so strong as heretofore & no prospect of ever becoming so; America in my opinion is stronger then ever. And yet all is lost unless our people are reclaimed. I have this day a Letr. from Wmsburg. dated Decr. 12, which has the following paragraph, which looks well. "A Vessell in 12 Days from Hispaniola brings advice, that a large Spanish fleet was arrived at that place with 12000 Soldiers; & their destination was supposed against Jamaica. It was expected war was then declared against G.B." The Tories in Phila. are much tired of their new Guests, Duché gone to Britain, Doctor Chauvet going to Jamaica. We intend to send Israel Pemberton into the City to head a party against Howe. what think ye of the scheme? Tis late, Mrs. Lee in bed & asleep but she left her commands with me to present her best respects to Mrs. Adams & Yourself, in which I beg to be joined.

Adieu my friend

Francis Lightfoot Lee

[P.S.] I have corrected some errors in this Letr., you must take care of the rest, I have not time. Compts. to Mr. J. Adams.

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Lee was one of the committee appointed on December 12 to consider Deputy Clothier General Samuel A. Otis' letters of November 26 and 29. Congress had approved the committee's report on December 20, recommending that state legislatures take vigorous measures to suppress speculation in goods needed for the army. See *JCC*, 9:1022, 1042-47.

<sup>2</sup> "Joyce Junior" was the pseudonym adopted by a Bostonian who in 1774 led a committee on tarring and feathering and reemerged in 1777 to drive several loyalists from the city. See William Duer to John Jay, May 28, 1777, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> For acts passed by the Virginia Assembly during the October 1777 session authorizing the seizure of goods for the army, curbing forestalling and engrossing, and prohibiting the exportation of pork and beef, see William W. Hening, *The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia* (Richmond: J. & G. Cochran, 1821), 9:375-77, 382-87.

## Jonathan Bayard Smith to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

Lancaster Decr. 22 1777

Inclosed you have a resolution of Congress on the subject of the memorial from your State with which I was charged. I am happy to inform you that the army has taken quarters in a position which I presume will be agreeable to the State.<sup>1</sup> Congress have now before them a number of resolutions concerning the army which will probably be transmitted in a day or two to the assembly. On the other leaf you have a copy of an act passed by the State of Virginia which your delegates thought it their duty to transmit to you.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honor to be with great regard your Excellencys counsel and the humble army's most humble servant,

Jona B. Smith

MS not found; reprinted from Burnett, *Letters*, 2:595. Addressed: "His Excellency the President Honble the Counsel and Honble the Assembly."

<sup>1</sup> See Smith's first letter to George Bryan of December 19, 1777, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> For Virginia's "act for speedily cloathing the troops raised by this commonwealth now in Continental service," see *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:125-27.

## Henry Laurens to George Clinton

Sir,

York 23d December 1777

The last I had the honour of writing to you was dated the 3d Inst. Hitherto I have received none of your Excellencys favours.

Under Cover with this your Excellency will receive a Letter framed by, & Signed by order of Congress to which I have prefixed the present date,<sup>1</sup> together with a Resolution of the 20th particularly referred to in the Letter—also a Resolve of the 9th Inst. recommending the Several States, & among others to New York to contribute to a more ample Representation of Delegates than appear at present in Congress, by Sending forward an additional number of Members without delay. These your Excellency will be pleased to lay before the proper powers in your State as early as possible. I am with very great Respect.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to the States, this date.



## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir, (Copy) York Town 23d December 1777.

My last trouble was under the 1st Inst. by Messenger Tais, since which your dispatch of the 27th November came to hand & I believe another of your favours, this or these were immediately sent to Congress & I presume committed to the Board of War, I have been closely confined by a Severe attack of the Gout for 15 days past, & therefore am not so intimately acquainted with the Steps of Congress as I should have been if my health had not failed, nor enabled to write to you with that accuracy which I should do if your Letters were before me.

The Commands which I have this Evening received from Congress to be transmitted to you are as follows.

An Act of the 19th Resolving that Accounts for provision & other necessities already Supplied, or to be here after supplied to British Prisoners, shall be discharged by equivalents in kind, or by Gold & Silver, prefaced by sufficient reasons for this determination Another Act of the 22d Ordering that all Gold & Silver received by virtue of the first mentioned Resolution be immediately paid into the Continental Treasury.<sup>1</sup>

I am further charged by a Member to inform you as a message from Congress that it is expected you will see that all accounts with General Burgoyne are settled & fully paid agreeable to the above-mentioned Resolves before the embarkation of himself or other Officers & Troops included in the Convention of Saratoga.

A Committee are now preparing proper Instructions for your proceeding with respect to the demanded description of Soldiers & other persons comprehended in that agreement.<sup>2</sup> Mr. Burgoyne's memory has deceived him in the Account which he gives of Sir Guy Carleton's releasing many hundred Continental Troops upon their bare parol. Mr. Boudinot has shewn me a much more accurate State of which you will be fully & very soon informed. These articles are however mere baggatelle compared with his complaint that the public faith with respect to the Convention is infracted, in a Letter to Major General Gates, it will be impossible to part with him before an eclaircissement is had on this important charge. I have the honour to be, sir &c &c, Henry Laurens, Presidt of Congress

RC (MHi). In a clerical hand and signed by Laurens.

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter this day to Robert Treat Paine, speaker pro tempore of the Massachusetts Assembly, transmitting copies of these two resolves. PCC, item 13, fol. 70.

<sup>2</sup> For Congress' resolution of this issue, see Laurens to Heath, December 27, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to James McLene

Sir,

York 23d December 1777

Under Cover with this I forward a Packet containing a Letter to which I have prefix'd the present date framed by & Signed by order of Congress together with Resolutions dated the 20th particularly referred to in that Letter.<sup>1</sup>

I likewise transmit the three undermentioned Acts of Congress which you will, with the above be pleased to lay before the General Assembly.

9th Inst. intimating the want of Members in Congress & particularly from this State.

10th. Recommending measures for securing provisions for the Army of the United States & depriving the Enemy of such supplies.

15th. Informing that George Climer Esqr. is appointed a Commissioner in Indian affairs on the Western frontier.

I cannot cast my Eye on the date of a Resolve of Congress the 9th Inst. forwarded on the 23d without pain, nor without seeing a necessity for apologizing for such extraordinary delay—how long these have been on my Table I cannot certainly tell, but from the 9th Inst. I have been & am now closely confined by a severe attack of the Gout, on the 10th or 11th I requested Congress to appoint a president for the dispatch of public business foreseeing that I should be long unable to discharge the Duty of that Office with that propriety which would afford even myself, satisfaction, but they were pleased not to pay that attention to my address which I wished. I have therefore under very great bodily pains proceeded to do business every day & I have the Satisfaction to find that I am not delinquent in any Instance except this before us, which I trust will be attended with no Ill consequences & I intreat your Honorable House will believe that mere accident & not a want of Respect to them or of my Duty to the public, has occasioned the present deficiency.

I have the honour to be with great Regard & Respect

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "James McLene Esquire, Speaker of the Honorable the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Lancaster. Per Mr Brown."

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to the States, this date.

## Henry Laurens to Samuel H. Parsons

Sir,

York 23d December 1777

Your favour of the 2d Inst.<sup>1</sup> including your Correspondence with General Tryon came duly to hand & were immediately presented to Congress, in consequence of which I am charged to forward the

inclosed resolve of the 20th directing you to transmit an Authentic Account of the Maltreatment which John & William<sup>2</sup> Vantassel & their families Suffered from the Enemy. The Original Letter also from Govr. Tryon of the 23 November you are desired to forward.

Your proceeding to retort the injuries received from the Enemy, by the destruction of Mr. Delancey's House within five Miles of the City of New York although not recognized in Congress, affords as far as I can learn, general Satisfaction.

I am with very great Regard

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Samuel H. Parsons Esquire, Brigadier General, at Maroneck Connecticut."

<sup>1</sup> General Parson's December 2 letter to Laurens, which described a recent raid by Gen. William Tryon in the vicinity of Mamaroneck, N.Y., is in PCC, item 161, fols. 327-29.

<sup>2</sup> Philip is the forename given in *JCC*, 9:1040.

## Henry Laurens to the States

Sir

York Town 23d December 1777.

I am directed by Congress to transmit to your honorable body, the enclosed resolutions, which the pressing wants of the army, & the arts & avarice of engrossers & extortioners have rendered indispensibly necessary to the general welfare.<sup>1</sup>

It is with deep concern that Congress after having for some time contemplated in painful silence the mischiefs which threaten this extended continent from the growing avarice of the times, feel themselves constrained to recommend measures, which the virtue of all classes of men rendered not long since, unnecessary, & which a scrupulous regard for the security of property to every citizen of these States has hitherto restrained them from adopting; but (unhappy the case of America) Laws unworthy the character of infant republics are become necessary to supply the defect of public virtue, & to correct the vices of some of her sons; & she is called upon by the grand principle of self preservation to guard against the parricide of those, whom she has fostered in her own bosom.

To minds, whose reflections are employed on the importance of the cause in which we are engaged, & which feel for every circumstance which may affect the honor and safety of these States, it must give the most painful sensations to consider, that at a time when the late signal successes we have been blest with, the reduced numbers of the enemy, the difficulties they meet with in procuring foreign levies, & the political complexion of affairs in Europe, have deprived Britain of many of those resources, on which she has so much depended; when the numbers & improving discipline of our army, the prodigious augmentation of our military stores, the quantity of



provisions, with which this country abounds, & the large supplies of cloathing, which have of late been imported by private persons afford not only the opportunity but the means, under divine providence, of establishing our liberties by a few exertions, this bright prospect should be clouded over, & this great & glorious event endangered, by the languor of too many, & by the arts & avarice of designing individuals, who like the British Nabobs of the East, are corrupting the manners of a whole nation, & building vast fortunes on the destruction of the liberties of the Western World.

It is to be hoped however, that the wise & spirited laws of the different States, aided by the influence & exertions of the real patriots, will apply effectual remedies to these alarming evils; that the old & hardened offenders will be punished, that those in whose bosoms the sparks of public virtue are not yet extinguished, will be reclaimed: the languid roused from their present apathy; & that all classes of men will unite with their former spirit & virtue against an enemy, whose progress is marked with every vestige of barbarity. & whose determined object is to establish a tyranny of the most dangerous & debasing nature over the inhabitants of a vast continent.

Congress flatter themselves that the resolutions herewith transmitted will tend to accomplish some of these valuable purposes, & they therefore esteem it their duty to recommend them to the serious consideration of your honourable house,<sup>2</sup> & hope they will be carried into execution, as expeditiously & secretly as possible.

By order of Congress,

Henry Laurens, President

RC (R-Ar). In a clerical hand and signed by Laurens. This circular letter to the legislatures of the states was prepared by the committee appointed on December 12 to consider letters from Deputy Clothier General Samuel A. Otis. *JCC*, 9:1022, 1031, 1033, 1042, 1046-47.

<sup>1</sup> For the December 20 resolves referred to here, see *JCC*, 9:1043-45. Laurens also transmitted copies of these resolves with brief letters that he wrote on this day to Gov. Nicholas Cooke of Rhode Island and President Meshech Weare of New Hampshire, on December 26 to Govs. Thomas Johnson of Maryland, Patrick Henry of Virginia, and Richard Caswell of North Carolina, and on December 29 to President John Rutledge of South Carolina and Gov. John Treutlan of Georgia. *PCC*, item 13, fols. 68-70, 85-87.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens inadvertently offended Gov. Jonathan Trumbull by addressing an RC of this letter to the speaker of the Connecticut Assembly rather than to the governor himself. For the minor tempest stirred up by this oversight, see James Lovell to Joseph Trumbull, January 27; Eliphalet Dyer to Joseph Trumbull, February 8; and Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr., February 9, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Sir,

York 23d December 1777

The last which I had the honour of writing to your Excellency was dated the 3d Inst. since which your Excellency's favor of the 3d found

me where I am still confined in Bed by a Severe attack of the Gout. This however has not exempted me from Duty. Congress were not pleased to appoint another member to act as President which I intreated them to do, as soon as I discovered that the visit was like to be formidable. I have therefore been drudging on not much regarding the little addition of pain occasioned by the exercise of body in such awkward positions as the Case requires. I regret that tis not in my power to reply so particularly as I would do if I were able to your Excellency's favour above mentioned as well as to one or two dispatches which I sent immediately upon Receipt of them to Congress & have not seen them Since. Probably the needful answer to these may be contained in some of the papers which I am to forward under Cover with this Vizt.

Resolve of the 9th Inst. intimating the necessity for a more ample Representation in Congress than the present & calling upon certain States, among others Connecticut to send forward an additional number of Members without delay.

Resolve of the 17th requesting & authorising your Excellency & the Council to lay up Salt provisions for the use of the Army & to Co-operate with Mr. Colt.

An Act of the 19th restricting the payment for all supplies to British Prisoners to be made by equivalents of provisions & other necessities or in Gold & Silver to which is subjoined a Resolve of the 22d directing that all Gold & Silver which shall be received in consequence of this Regulation be paid into the Continental Treasury.

A Warrant dated the 20th upon the Loan Office Connecticut for 200,000 Dollars for enabling the payment for provisions.

In a packet under a flying Seal which will accompany this your Excellency will receive a Letter framed by, & Signed by order of, Congress addressed to the Speaker of the General Assembly together with an Act of Resolves particularly referred to in the Letter.<sup>1</sup> In the mode of Address I have followed the order I received, but your Excellency will be pleased to understand that it is intended for the Legislative powers of the State & will dispose of it accordingly.

In another packet your Excellency will receive twenty four Blank Commissions for private Ships of War with an equal number of Bonds & Instructions. It is now much passed Midnight. I hope I have executed without error the several charges laid on me, if not I am sure your goodness Sir upon this extraordinary occasion will readily pardon me.

I shall have the honour of addressing your Excellency again in a very few days. Mean time I remain with very great esteem & regard &ca

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to the States, this date, note 2.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York 23d December 1777

I had the honour of writing to your Excellency the 20th by Messenger Macklosky Since which I have not received any of your Excellency's favours nor any Commands from Congress to be transmitted to you.

General Conway is so polite as to afford me an opportunity of conveying a Packet to your Excellency which I received last Evening from Majr. General Gates. At the same time I send the correspondence alluded to in my last between Brigadier Parsons & General Tryon, I believe I was premature in giving this Gentleman the title of Sir William—& I also add Copy of a Letter from the Brigadier to a Member of Congress which shews that he had retorted the injuries he complained of by an Act which he would not have the Enemy believe he meditated. If your Excellency shall not have seen other Copies these will give some information. For the first Instance, a British Crew of a vessel bound from Granada to New York with 70 Puncheons of Rum & Six Hogsheads Sugar for the use of the Enemy's Troops, some time last Month dispossessed the Master of Command & carried the Vessel into Charles Town So. Carolina, where, according to a Resolve of Congress the Value of Vessel & Cargo were adjudged prize to the Captors.<sup>1</sup> This Resolve was founded on the practice of the British Court for encouraging infidelity & treachery among our Seamen. I hope all their infamous examples & I have no doubt this particular one will be retaliated an hundred fold.

I remain with very great regard & Esteem. &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> This resolve had been passed on October 14. JCC, 9:802.

## James Lovell to William Whipple

Dear Sir,

Dec 23d 1777.

I have rec'd your favor by Mr Storer and was exceedingly pleased with the invoice of a newly arrived cargo, but I would not have you think that the live stock mentioned in your letter created any part of my pleasure—quite the reverse, I assure you.

You will have officers on furlough from the *grand* army to give an history of their own feats so that I need not dwell upon that topic. I will only say that it is determined to hut at and near Sweed's Ford. You seem most to expect from me foreign news. It is strange that we have had no letters from the Commissioners since the 26th of May last. It is true we have a small epistle from A.L.—Dated Berlin June



and some letters from him and his brother Wm<sup>1</sup> dated July 31st and Sept 3d, all discouraging as to the temper of the European Courts, they being full of professions of friendship and declarations of being *interested* in our success, and therefore ardently wishing it while nothing can move them from their qualms and caution which are carried to a very ridiculous length. Spain is said to be engaged only about her little Portuguese War. France is governed by timidity and the three great Northern powers are immersed in schemes of plundering the Turk and the Pole and dividing the spoils; while Europe is in this temper, though the justice of our cause has made all men unanimous in our favor, it is not wonderful (says our friend) that we are left like Hercules in his cradle to strangle the serpent that is the terror of Europe.

"You Sir with Mr Lee will think it happy for us that the fears and occupations of the powers of Europe have prevented them from forming treaties with us when our situation would have given them infinite advantages.

"When our distresses are past and our fears subsided, we shall be enabled to see and to follow our interests in the alliances we form, which I do not think would be entirely the case at present."<sup>2</sup>

I have written this to you in confidence for really Bingham's letter of Octr 13th may have good ministerial intelligence which merchants at Nantes might not know on Sept 5th which is the date of a letter to Mr Geary from a young man who says the French Court "is still acting a cowardly part."

Please to present my love to your brother and lady acknowledging the receipt of his kind letter of the 3d. Present also my best compliments to your Miss Whipple and believe me, your affectionate friend,

J.L.

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> That is, Arthur and William Lee.

<sup>2</sup> This quotation is from Arthur Lee's July 31 letter to Samuel Adams, which is extracted in Lovell's December 18, 1777, letter to Richard Henry Lee.

## James Lovell to William Whipple

Dear Sir

Dec 23d 1777

After Sealing the enclosed I rec'd a letter from a friend at Nantes dated Oct 18th which goes near to destroy my argumentation about Bingham's letter.<sup>1</sup> I say *near* because the intelligence from Newfoundland accords with the last part of my friend's letter.

The Randolph and Alfred arrived at L'Orient the 6th of Octr. having taken two Jamaicamen which they sold privately for 9700

Sterling. Biddle's prizes are not those which the papers speak of as claimed. Those were taken by Capt Kendrick a vessel from Massachusetts.

My friend writes that two Jamaicamen he supposed would be restored to the English having been seized by the Admiralty. Prizes, it is true, are sold but under value. The policy of the Nation and the interest of Individuals go hand in hand.

"It is pretended that when their *Baltic Ships and fishermen* were in they will speak in a different tone to the English. Two or three months will convince us whether these professions are sincere or not, but I apprehend some singular success in America would be a more weighty argument in our favor than any other circumstance whatever."

Tr (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> That is, Jonathan William's October 18 letter to Lovell, whose authorship is identified in Lovell to Richard Henry Lee, December 28, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to James Duane

Dear Sir,

York 24th December 1777

I hope this will meet you perfectly happy in domestic enjoyments. Nothing I have at present to offer is intended to interrupt them one moment. I bring you tokens of peace, good will & benevolence.

The Eagle Tail & Rattle Trap nicely Cased up are put into a Waggon now bound to Albany with public Money, under the protection of Peter Webber, who will deliver them to your order. When these are presented to the Sachems of the Six Nations, you may assure them upon the best grounds, that the Creek Indians have driven out of their Towns, Cameron & Tait, two Agents under the King's Superintendent of Indian affairs, & forbid their return at the peril of their Lives. The Indians had Seized & divided among them 100 Horse loads of Goods, which John Stuart the Superintendent had sent in order to bribe them to go to War against Georgia & So. Carolina—after the flight & arrival of the Agents at Pansacola—Mr. Stuart sent in a Peace Talk proposing to forgive the Creeks for the Insults & plunder which they had committed, provided they would readmit his Agents who should in such Case return with hands full of presents, & drive out the Traders & Agents from So. Carolina, who, he attempted to insinuate, could not long Supply their wants of Clothing & other goods. The Indians replied, he had too often told them lies, they would no longer be deceived by him nor his Emisaries, nor would they quarrel with their old friends again.

Mr. President Rutledge writes me, that the little Carpenter & the

Great Warrior from the Cherokees, two Men of the first influence in that Nation, were actually on the Road to Charles Town—I suppose to renew the Treaty of Peace & brighten the Chain—& adds that Indian affairs in general wore a favorable aspect.

A Vessel containing 70 Hogsheads of Rum & 6 Hogsheads of Sugar with some other goods intended from Granada to New York for the use of the Enemy had been carried into Charles Town by the Mate & Crew, who had dispossessed the Master of Command. The whole was adjudged, in pursuance of the Resolution of Congress, prize to the Captors.<sup>1</sup> This is the first retort upon that Species of British policy calculated for encouraging infidelity & Treachery among Seamen in the service of these States. I have no doubt but that in a few Months they will experience an hundred fold retaliation of their infamous Example—which nothing but dire necessity could have induced virtuous Americans to Copy.

If there is nothing amiss good Sir in all that is Said what follows will please you more.

Two or three days ago I received a Letter from a Correspondent in Charles Town containing these Sympathetic sentiments. "A poor Brother Type, John Holt I fear has been ruined by the infamous conduct of the Savage Vaughan.<sup>2</sup> I would wish to aid him in his distress which may be the more acceptable at this juncture, when perhaps his friends may be reduced to Similar circumstances with himself. You will do me a Singular kindness if his Situation is such as I apprehend it must be, if you will take the trouble of remitting him two hundred Dollars on my Account. I would not use this freedom could I procure a Bill just now. You will add to the obligation if you will accompany the Remittance with a Line informing him it comes from a person who will make himself known when Times are better."

I recollect you shewed me a Letter in Congress from the unfortunate Mr. Holt, which together with my ignorance of the place of his abode, has induced me to trouble you on this occasion. I know you will be so good as to give him the necessary information adding to the above that I will honour his draught upon sight for the Sum above mentioned, or if he pleases to draw for Three hundred Dollars I will find out a person who will cheerfully add the latter hundred without Account. If it be more agreeable I will send three hundred Dollars directly to him when I am informed of his Address.

I am a little Indebted to one of the New York Printers to whom you were so good as to introduce me. If Mr. Holt is the Man, I cannot wonder, but if any other, I would request you at your Leisure & Convenience to enquire why he has not sent me a News paper since we left Philadelphia & if he will inform me the amount of my debt, I will take means immediately for discharging it.

I wont be so rude as to tell you that I am writing in Bed where I



have been closely confined Sixteen Days past by a heavy attack of the Gout in both feet. I have drank 16 Bottles less Madeira than I should otherwise have done & consequently have 16 times 20 or 25s the more to spare for Christmas Boxes. Adieu Dear Sir. I wish you through Life free from pain & all unhappiness, being with great respect & Esteem &ca<sup>3</sup>

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 9:776-77.

<sup>2</sup> John Holt, printer of the *New-York Journal*, had lost most of his printing equipment during an October 1777 raid on Kingston, N.Y., where he had moved the paper after the British occupation of New York City. *DAB*.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens also wrote the following brief letter this day to John Langdon, the Continental prize agent in New Hampshire: "By the hands of Mr. Storer you will receive twelve Blank Commissions for private Ships of War together with Bonds & Instructions to each—The receipt of which you will be pleased in due course to acknowledge & to return the Bonds when Executed." *PCC*, item 13, fol. 76.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York 24th December 1777

I had the honour of writing to your Excellency yesterday by General Conway. I now inclose a Resolve of Congress of the 22d Sent in to me last Night, directing all Gold & Silver which shall be received for provision or other necessities supplied British Prisoners to be paid immediately into the Continental Treasury. To this I will take the liberty of adding extract of a Letter dated Nantz the 18th October, the latest date I have heard of. From this writers account, an opinion which I have long entertained & some times expressed that the Court of Versailles, were playing off these Infant States as puppets for the Sole benefit of France, is not discountenanced. Neither Such versatile attachment on one Side nor the enormous considerations which we are paying for their Trade &c on the other will entitle them to strong claims upon our gratitude. The less obligation we are under the better.

If War is declared between England & France according to present appearances it must from necessity commence with the former.

I am with very great Regard &c.<sup>1</sup>

LB (DNA: *PCC*, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> On Christmas day Laurens sent Washington a December 24 resolve promoting William Barton to the rank of colonel in the Continental Army and recommending him for employment "on account of his enterprizing spirit, and his merit in taking Major General Prescott prisoner." *PCC*, item 13, fol. 78; and *JCC*, 9:1051. For further information on the capture of Prescott, see John Hancock to William Barton, July 26, 1777.

## Robert Morris to John Brown

D sir

Manheim Decr. 24th. 1777

I have received yours of the 18th & 22d and thank you for their Contents, but am very sorry Mr Smith did not lay the letters I sent him respecting my Brother before Congress as it is absolutely necessary that he be displaced immediately. I am sorely hurt by his Conduct and mortified to the very Soul of it, for yesterday I received further letters respecting him, by which I perceive the Commissioners are about making a representation of him to Congress that may hurt me unless my readiness to discharge him on the first certainty I received of his Ill behaviour is previously made known, therefore I hope Mr Smith will lay those letters before them telling when he got 'em.

I Expect this will meet you at the Ferry with Bob, but if you dont receive Mr. Nesbitts Note in time he will go on to York and I wish you wou'd tell Mr Smith & Mr Duer I shoud be very happy to see them here tomorrow. This affair of my Brother occasions me much business and many other things turn up to detain me so that I dont know when I shall see York unless something makes my presence absolutely necessary. I rejoice in the arrival you mention and hope we shall get every thing necessary for the Army so as to give them good Spirits & Vigour.

You will find herein an order on his Excellency Colo Laurens for 13359 Dollars which I paid here to Mr Pringle, there is a letter of advice with it, apply to the President with my Compts to order you payment of this bill, & You will also find herein a letter to me from Messrs. Jenifer & Hooe of Alexandria dated 13th Inst. a receipt & Certificate for Thirty barrells of Powder being part of the 95 barrells I sold the Board of War deliverable at that place, I beg you will wait on the Board, shew them this letter & let them know the Powder has been sold by these Gentn contrary to my orders which I am exceedingly sorry for but as it cannot now be helped you will repay them for 65 Barrells of sd. Powder 109 lb each is 7085 lb at 7/6 being just 7085 Dollars & the remainder of the order you'l apply to the other payments you have to make on my Account. Speak to Mr. Peters & shew him these Papers about the Powder immediately. I hope before long to let them have a larger quantity, they will grant a receipt for the money repaid expressing what it is for and you'l return me the letter & other receipts unless they choose to take that receipt & Certificate for the Powder at Blandensburg & grant me a rect for the 30 barrells.

I wish you & all my Friends a merry Christmass & am Dr sir, Your  
Obed hble servt. Robt Morris

RC (NjP). Addressed by John Swanwick: "To Mr. John Brown, Secy. of the Marine Committee of Congress."

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

York Town Decr. 24th. 1777

The Delegates of this State are honored with your favor of the 20th which shall forthwith be laid before Congress to obtain a further regulation of the hire of Waggon.<sup>1</sup> An ambiguity in Genl Armstrongs Letter and the entire silence of Council on the Subject leaves us in doubt respecting their pleasure.<sup>2</sup> If a repeal of the Resolve of Congress of one Substitute for two Yeoman is meant, it falls in with my judgment, and shall be glad to have it signified. Coll. Smith has forwarded to you the Resolve of Congress in answer to the Remonstrance of our State, also copy of a Law of Virginia to suppress Monopoly.<sup>3</sup>

I should be very sorry my worthy patriotic friend Mrs. Farguson should be involved in the same predicament with her Husband as to her interest, when her bosom glowes with her love to these States, and has displayed such a specimen of heroism as will make her name renowned thro history by alienating herself from a beloved husband on Account of his taking part against her Country; this is no finesse as some have imagined, who do not know the virtuous principles and magnanimity of this Lady, for from my better knowledge and an intimate acquaintance from my youth I dare pawn my honor for her. I beg Council will take this Case under their particular notice and shield this Lady at least from the indiscretion of an Officer until they can come to a deliberate resolution, for being only with a female friend equally deprived, and on the same account, of the advice and protection of their most near friends, who are with the Enemy, deserves particular attention, which I take the Liberty to recommend to the Honble Council and thro them to the Legislature as the greatest obligation they can lay on me.<sup>4</sup> I am most respectfully, Sir, Yr. most ob. hume. Serv.

Daniel Roberdeau

RC (PHarH).

<sup>1</sup> President Wharton's December 20 letter to the Pennsylvania delegates is in *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:116-17.

<sup>2</sup> For Gen. John Armstrong's December 16 letter to Thomas Wharton, in which he mentioned "the design of filling up the Quotas of the several States with Continental Troops, so as in a great measure to supercede the use of the Militia" and which he asked Wharton to forward a copy of to Roderdeau, see *ibid.*, pp. 100-102.

<sup>3</sup> See Jonathan Bayard Smith to Thomas Wharton. December 22, 1777.

<sup>4</sup> For Mrs. Elizabeth Ferguson's memorial to the Pennsylvania Council, seeking exemption from the proscription directed at her husband Henry for his cooperation with the British after the capture of Philadelphia, see *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:617-19.



## Edward Langworthy to Benjamin Rush

Sir,

York Town, Decr 26th 1777.

When what is proposed has for its object the Comfort and advantage of the sick & wounded in the American Hospitals, I can need no Apology for the Liberty I have taken in writing to you. By favour of Mr Duer I have sent you a Pound of Sago,<sup>1</sup> the produce of the State of Georgia, which I would recommend to your Examination; as you will perceive by the Pamphlet herewith transmitted, it has met with the Approbation of several eminent & learned Physicians in Europe.

Mr Samuel Bowen the Patentee of this Sago has for some years past resided in Georgia, where he made his experiments & brought the Sago Powder to perfection, equal to that from the East Indies. In the Year 1773 he left Georgia, & took with him several kinds of Seeds, Plants &c in order to lay them before the royal Society; by a Letter received from him soon after his arrival in London, it appeared, that he had received a Gold Medal, as a premium for extracting Oil from Benniseed. Since this Time his family have received no Letters from him, occasioned by the unhappy disputes that have subsisted between Great Britain and America, & the Georgia Letters have been intercepted by the Governor of East Florida, at St. Augustine.

Mrs Bowen, his wife has continued the manufacture of the Sago &c on his Plantation & makes about 150 Barrels per Annum, which She has sold to the French Vessels & others that have brought in their Cargoes to the Port of Savannah.

Having been very intimate with the Family for several Years & being appointed one of the Delegates for the State of Georgia, I proposed to Mrs Bowen to make known her manufacture to the Continental Congress, that if it met with their Approbation, the American Army and Navy might be supplied therewith. I have however previous to any Application to Congress thought proper to communicate this to you & should be extremely happy to have your Opinion on this matter, whether you think it would not be proper to adopt the use of this powder into the American Hospitals; its Price is very reasonable, and as it is the produce of the Continent, it is certainly an Object worthy of encouragement & protection.

I was in London in the Year 1768 & to my certain knowledge at that time Bowen's Sago Powder was used by many eminent Physicians & I have been informed from good Authority, that the East India Company had made proposals to Mr. Bowen, in order to prevent him from carrying on this manufacture.

I should be glad to hear from you thro' Mr Duer & am sir, with great respect, Your most obedient Servant,

Edward Langworthy

RC (PPL).

<sup>1</sup> A nutritious starch extracted from the sago palm.

## Robert Morris to Henry Laurens

Sir

Manheim December 26th. 1777

On the 17th Inst. I received at this place two letters from my Friend Mr. John Ross dated in Nantes the 2d of August & 20th of Sept. which came Via Virginia, in a Sloop called the Congress lately arrived there. These letters were written for the purpose of making me acquainted with the unworthy conduct of my Brother Mr. Thos. Morris in Nantes & their contents shocked me to the very Soul, I perceived instantly how grossly I had long been imposed on & deemed it my duty to have him immediately discharged from the Agency in which he was employed for the Public. Accordingly I wrote that very day to the Honble Wm. Smith Esq. a Member of the Commercial Committee,<sup>1</sup> an Account of this intelligence & enclosing a letter for Mr. Thos. Morris, one for Messrs. Pliarne, Penet & Co. & another for Mr. J. Gruel, requesting they might be signed if approved by the Committee & dispatched in order that Mr. Morris might be dismissed & the business that had passed under his direction be brought to a settlement soon as possible. All these letters I wished to have laid before the Congress for their approbation; and in order to prove *that I had not a wish* to retain my Brother in the Public service one moment after I knew him to be unworthy of the employ. I then thought those letters wou'd be all that was necessary on the occasion & and that my Brothers dismission would have wiped away the discredit his conduct had brought on our Commercial department & the final settlement of the Accounts have ended the disgrace he had brought on me, leaving only himself the Victim of his Folly. But on the 23d Inst. I received several letters from Mr. Deane, by the Eastern Post, wrote in consequence of one that I had unfortunately written to him the 29th June last, whilst under the influence of an unjust and erroneous opinion that the Commissioners had used my Brother very cruelly in their manner of mentioning him to Congress. In this letter I censured them freely, believing that I had sufficient reason for doing so. These censures & the very unwarrantable use Mr. Thos. Morris made of the letter, has excited the keenest resentment of the Commissioners against me, & I confess as things are really circumstanced I am not surprized at it. This resentment has impelled them to put the harshest interpretation on some passages in my letter & to represent my conduct in respect to my Brother in colours it does not deserve.

The receipt of these letters distressed me exceedingly because I had been convinced by Mr. Ross that I was in the wrong with respect to the Commissioners, & had determined to acknowledge it fully & freely to them; but on finding that altho' my letter to Mr. Deane was a private one, and his to me the same, yet he desired I shou'd lay his before Congress. It was compelling me to open before that August

Body a dispute that I thought they ought not to be troubled with, yet as his letters insinuate many charges against me, I concluded to comply with his request and Vindicate myself against insinuations & reflections not founded in Justice or reality.<sup>2</sup> I find however by a letter received yesterday, that Copies of these letters from Mr. Deane to me have already been read in Congress, consequently that it is unnecessary for me to bring the Original; & my design in giving you Sir, the trouble of Reading & Congress of hearing this letter, is not to recriminate on Mr. Deane, but to justify myself & this I propose to do by a plain Narrative of the Facts that have led me into the present embarrassments & I must beg a patient & candid hearing from you and them.

Mr. Thos. Morris & myself are descended from a Father whose Virtue & whose Memory I have ever revered with the most Filial Piety. Our Mothers were not the same & this youth was born after our Father's decease, without any sufficient provision made for his maintenance. The tender regard I bore to the Parent, I determined when very young to extend to his Offspring, & no sooner had I fixed myself in the World than I took charge of this Brother. I gave him the best Education that cou'd be obtained in Philadelphia, & took as much care of his Morals as my time & capacity enabled. When he was arrived at a proper Age I took him into my Counting House to instruct him in the profession from which he was to draw his future support. In this situation he remained about three years, during which time he discovered on all occasions a good Understanding, sound judgment & clear Head, with remarkable facility in dispatching business. His behaviour was then Modest & Innocent, his Heart pure, & he possessed a Mind strongly Actuated by principals of Honor, at least these were the opinions I had formed, & such was the Character he bore amongst his own acquaintance, from hence I formed the most pleasing expectation, & saw but one source from whence any reverse cou'd spring. This was a fondness he early discovered of being the head of his Company, a disposition more dangerous to youth than any other & which in fact has been his ruin. This it was that first led him to seek improper Company, who readily granting him the pre-eminence he delighted in, soon carried him into the practice of their Follies & Vices. When I discovered this to be the case & found that advice had not its proper weight, and thinking frequent exercise of Authority might be dangerous, I fell on the expedient of sending him to Spain (in order to break off his connection with Worthless Companions) & there placed him in an eminent Counting House where he gained much knowledge & experience & where he acquired the French & Spanish Languages so as to write & Speak both with great fluency. At a proper season I recalled him to America & took him a Partner in our House, promising myself assistance & relief from his abilities & *expected* assiduity; & for some time had great satisfaction



in him, but unfortunately his former associates found him out & again led him astray. At this period the Commercial business of America was interrupted by certain resolutions of Congress, & fearing that Idle time & these associates wou'd bring him to ruin, I determined on sending him to Europe well recommended with Money in his Pocket, in hopes to open his mind, extend his Ideas & give him a habit of keeping & seeking good Company. He travelled through Spain, Italy & into France with reputation kept by means of introductions. I procured for him the best Company at every place he went to, & I had the pleasure to receive many letters from my Friends as well as from himself in the most satisfactory Stile. These letters, his assurances, & those from some Friends on his behalf, regained my confidence & I judged he had now arrived at the period of proper reflection, for such usually happens to young People who have been too Volatile in the first Stages of Manhood. At this Period it happened that a Commercial Agent became necessary to have a general superintendancy of the Public business in Europe. My Brother was then in France (as I thought) possessed of my good opinion, & reflecting that he was qualified for that Agency by his Education in two Counting Houses where he had seen & executed much business, by his perfect knowledge of the Languages, & by his being connected with some of the best Mercantile Houses in Europe & known to many more, I was prompted to offer his services to the Committee, firmly believing he wou'd be extreemly usefull & do honor to himself & me. Here I must observe that no part of his conduct had ever given me the least cause to suspect any want of integrity or breach of Honor, therefore, the only doubts I did or cou'd entertain, was wether he wou'd bestow that attention that he ought to this business; & for this I depended on the assurances he had given in his letters of a faithfull execution of any commands I might lay on him. The Committee, of which Doctr. Franklin was then a Member, was pleased to accept the offer, & on the Doctr's. going to France, he promised me to become a Friend & adviser to my Brother if he found it necessary. Mr. Deane had promised this before his departure & to make me acquainted with his conduct. I reposed myself in confidence that he cou'd not do any harm (as I shou'd soon hear how he managed & cou'd Act accordingly) & he might do much good. At the same time that I recommended him to the Agency I intrusted him to collect the debts due to our House in Europe & pay the ballances we might owe there, & since then have continued to employ him in the management of our own business. This must convince every person that I had full confidence in him, as I wou'd not have intrusted my own property & affairs in what I cou'd think doubtful hands.

I have given this long detail to shew the Foundation on which I recommended my Brother to his employment & I think any other

person in my situation wou'd have done the same thing, however if I am any ways culpable in having done so, it is the event & not the intention that makes me so, for cou'd I have had the least Idea of what has happened, I wou'd sooner have perished than he shou'd have been trusted. The next thing I am blamed for is granting greater faith to my Brothers representations than to the Commissioners letters. This was only the case in part, for I had other evidence than his letters, however I must also account for my conduct in this respect by a detail of circumstances. It happened very unfortunately that about the time Thos. Morris was appointed in America to this Agency, he had gone from France to London where totally unable to withstand the tempting scenes of pleasure *that sink of Iniquity affords*, he gave in to the pursuit with an eagerness (as I am now informed) that debauched his mind & laid the foundation for all that has since happened. He was in London at the time his letters of appointment arrived at Paris. Mr. Deane sent for him. He came & promised a faithful attention to business, he repaired to Nantes & finding Mr. Penet had been intrusted with a Contract for Public business, part of which had been executed, he readily fell into the proposals made by that House & became a party in it (but on what terms I do not know). Consequently he put the Public business into their hands (which was not inconsistent with the instructions under which he Acted). Whilst things were in this train in France, I recd. a letter from the Gentr. in Cadiz with whom my Brother had lived, a worthy Man who had great regard for him & wished to promote his welfare. He gave me reason to suppose his conduct in London had been out of Character & this gave the first alarm to my fears.

In consequence of which I wrote letters on the 31st Jany last to Mr. Deane, to Mr. Ross & to T. Morris, informing them of this intelligence & pressing their immediate care of & attention to the Public business shou'd he neglect it; I requested my Friend Ross to visit France on purpose to watch & inform me truly what was his conduct & insisted to my Brother that if he had been guilty of any neglect of duty or misconduct in discharge of his Public Trust, that he shou'd resign it into the hands of Mr. Deane or Mr. Ross, empowering them *regularly* to Act for him untill new arrangements were made. This done, I waited impatiently for the event. In the mean time, some disputes & mutual Complaints had arisen between Mr. Deane and my Brother, & on the arrival of the above letters the latter went to Paris, where they so far settled matters that he returned to Nantes with Mr. Deanes sanction (Mr. Ross being at Hamburg did not arrive untill long after). Some Ships arrived from Philada. at Nantes about this time with Cargoes on Public Account Consigned to the order of Thos. Morris, particularly the Success, Capt. Anderson, and Elizabeth & Mary, Capt. Young. By the return of one or both of these (I think) came letters from the Commissioners, saying to the

best of my remembrance "that Mr. Thos. Morris must be immediately displaced from his Agency" & another quoting the Paragraph of Doctr. Lee's letter from Bordeaux. Having no private letter *then* from Mr. Deane on this Subject, I was astonished at the Stile of these to Congress, for supposing my Brother guilty of some inattention, which was the most I did suppose, I could not think it right to blast entirely a young Mans reputation that was just setting out in the World, meerly because he was fond of pleasure; & as the letters he had written respecting the business under his care were full & clear they were produced to Congress in his justification & to prevent any hasty measures. I then related to Congress the substance of what I have now written but not so fully, & many Members as well as myself were surprized at the affair as it then stood. In consequence of what the Commissioners had wrote, I referred myself to Mr. Thos. Morris's private letters more particularly, & found there was no good understanding between Mr. Deane & him (but of Doctor Franklin he wrote respectfully) & he intimated that Mr. Deane was privately his Enemy. Not trusting however to his letters, I applied to several persons that came from Nantes, who assured me there was nothing amiss in his conduct that they knew or heard of, but more particularly one person who had transacted business with him. This Gentn. assured me over & over that he lived two Months in the House with my Brother, that he saw him assiduous, attentive, & industrious, that if it had not been for him, the business of those Ships wou'd not have been done in any reasonable time & that I might depend my Brother wou'd give entire satisfaction, at least he was fully perswaded of this. He said he knew well there was persons in France that envied his appointment & wou'd leave nothing undone to have him displaced & particularly mentioned Mr. Williams who he heard was Nephew to one & concerned in Trade with another of the Commissioners as the person intended to supply his place. The relator of this Account is now in America, a man of Character, sensible, & Capable for his sphere of Life, & when Mr. Deane arrives he shall have the satisfaction of seeing & examining him; 'till then I think it best to keep his Name for my own sake.

This relation & others less full, my Brother's & other letters & Mr. Deane's silence, led me to give some Credit to the Story, & altho' I was ever willing to displace my Brother on the least just cause appearing, yet I confess I did not like that he shou'd be sacrificed to make room for another person, & when Mr. Deane's first letters on the subject of my Brother did arrive, they did not remove the impressions I had received. Still I had not full confidence that some cause for what was written had not been given on his part, & I supposed his neglect or misconduct to have been magnified in the Account given thereof to the Commissioners, who cou'd not have been Eye Witnesses. In this situation, I wrote the letter of the 29th June that has so irritated them, telling very fully what I heard & censuring freely



what I thought wrong. Before I sent this letter I shewed it to some Members of Congress, relating truly as I have now done the circumstances that induced me to write it, & they thought me right as things then appeared. When Mr. Ross arrived at Nantes he advised me of it & promised immediately to enter into an examination of my Brothers conduct & give me a faithfull Account of it, but he was above ten Weeks there before he wrote that Account & I do suppose was trying what he could do by exhortation &c. At last the shocking account came on the 17th Inst. & that day I requested my Brother might be dismissed from his employment, giving notice to Congress of his Malconduct.

Here, Sir, I have given a Candid account of my reasons for introducing this unhappy Man into Public employ & for not sooner soliciting his dismissal. I did the first in hopes of his being servicable to the Public. at the same time that he wou'd enjoy an honorable & beneficial employment. I have done the latter as soon as I was convinced it ought to be done. Untill now I had no conception that it was possible for him to Act the part he has done, & nothing carries stronger conviction of his being irretrievably lost than his behaviour with my letter of the 29th June. Congress will observe that Mr. Deane complains of my having urged him to resent the injury's I believed they had done him. The Paragraph of my said letter to Mr. Deane on that subject is as follows. "I think those Public letters were cruel to my Brother & extremely unfriendly to myself. I shall inform him of them & if he has Spirit to resent them I hope he will also have judgment to do it properly."

This letter was enclosed to my Brother with the following Paragraph. "I now wait with impatience to learn the result of your journey with Capt. Bell to Paris, for on that & your future conduct depends your Commission as Commercial Agent to the United States of America, & I find there are those that envy you that appointment & wish it out of your hands as you may see by the enclosed letter for Silas Deane Esqr. which I send open for your perusal. & if you can determine to merit the continuance of that Commission by good behaviour I think I can maintain it for you in spite of all endeavours to the contrary, but if you will not deserve it, I shall be the first to take it from you & in that case it wou'd hardly be worth while sending the letter to Mr. Deane, only that there are some Commercial matters in it. Therefore you must *Seal & send it to him*. As to what I have said about your resenting their letters. I think you had best not think of any thing of that kind, least your past behaviour will not support you in doing it, & the best satisfaction you can have will be by holding your post under such good conduct as will deter them from attacking you again."

Thus, Sir, you will observe I only hinted resentment in the letter to Mr. Deane, & in fact retracted the Idea in this to T. M. & I

solemnly declare these are the only lines I ever wrote in that stile. Here it also appears that my design was to have the letter delivered immediately without any person seeing it but Mr. Deane & himself. Had that been done you wou'd not have been troubled on the occasion, but it wou'd have remained a private affair. The other charges and insinuations are chiefly founded on the Ill use Mr. Thos. Morris made of this letter on conjecture & on misinformation. If Mr. Deane had seen the whole of that long private letter he speaks of, he wou'd have seen how false & groundless the several stories told him of it were. Indeed, the Contents of that letter except the Paragraph above quoted wou'd Ill suit T. M. to shew any one, for knowing his own conduct they must have stung him to the Soul every time he read 'em unless his Soul was grown too Callous to have a feeling left.

Mr. Deane seems to remark on my private letters requesting him to displace T. M. from his employment if found unworthy of it, as if I meant thereby to exercise an undue authority as Member of Congress, but this is a strained construction. The only authority I must or cou'd mean to exercise was that of an Elder Brother over a younger, dependant on him for his support & accountable to him for his conduct, & under this Idea I insisted that he shou'd empower Mr. Deane or Mr. Ross to Act in his stead & under his Authority if they thought it necessary, which shews I had no design of exercising any other authority than the influence I expected my letters as an individual wou'd have had on my Brother, & I still think if these had been insisted on at that time, he wou'd have yielded to them. As to the expressions I used "of supporting him in his appointment if his conduct wou'd justify it; & that all the Commissioners together shou'd not remove him if he did his duty &ca." they may have been too strong, but I was writing these under the influence of a (groundless) belief that they had done him injustice & I knew Congress wou'd not displace him or any of their Servants that did their duty.

Upon the whole this was a private letter that has produced these animadversions on my conduct & therefore not wrote with any particular guard or caution, but it adds very much to the distress & unhappiness this unworthy Young Man has involved me in, to think I shou'd have passed censures on Doctr. Franklin & Mr. Deane (Doctr. Lee was not mentioned) which they did not deserve. I did it under a deception that most Men of feeling wou'd have fallen into, & I shall as freely own it to them as I do to you, holding it more honorable to acknowledge an error & attone for any injuries produced by it, than with a Vindictive Spirit to persist because you happen to have committed it. The Account given both by Mr. Ross & Mr. Deane of Mr. T. Morris's conduct so far surpasses any thing that I cou'd have an Idea of, that I do not pretend to animadvert on any part of it. My distress is more than I can describe; to think that in the midst of the most ardent exertions I was capable of

making to promote the Interest & welfare of my Country I shou'd be the means of introducing a Worthless Wretch to disgrace & discredit it, is too much to bear. I hope however that no pecuniary loss will happen to the Public & that the disgrace and discredit will be wiped away by his dismissal. From this hour I renounce all connection with him, altho I cannot help lamenting the loss of what he was capable of being. I shall enclose Mr. Deane a Copy of this letter for his satisfaction & make what I think suitable acknowledgments to both Doctr. Franklin & him.

Should Congress think there is any thing more on my part to be done, I am ready to obey their orders,<sup>3</sup> & with the greatest respect remain, Sir, Your most Obedt. Servt. Robt Morris

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Robert Morris to the Committee of Commerce, December 17, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Morris to Benjamin Franklin, December 27, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> See Henry Laurens to Robert Morris, January 1, 1778.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

York Town Decr. 26th. 1777

A letter is just come to hand giving the most melancholy discription of the situation of our army on account of difficiencies in the Commissary's and Qr. master's Departments.<sup>1</sup> With respect to the article of cloathing 2800 are obliged to retire in a naked condition unfit alone from that consideration for duty, that he was about to apply a remedy by taking supernumerary articles particularly from the disaffected agreeable to a resolve of Congress,<sup>2</sup> but desisted on an assurance from a Committee of this State that provision would be made without delay in a manner more to the satisfaction of the Inhabitants, but although their own Troops suffered in the most extream degree, either no supply had been sent, or so scanty that it did not deserve to be mentioned. Thus much from memory, I intend Council an extract of the Letter if I can obtain it. This is no time for recrimination otherwise I could trace our present distress to other sources, and indeed Genl. Washington speaks out for the first time and charges the principle difficiency vizt. in the Commissarys department, to the arrangement made by Congress. I foresaw the Consiquences and withstood the measure but in vain. I conjure the State in an excentric way to provide flour and fat Cattle and to this end to employ men of integrity and activity in different parts in the vicinity of the army, otherwise I have no other prospect but that the army will be reduced to the necessity of abandoning their post and disperse. An Officer of



merit writes to this Affect, that he could shed Tears of blood for the opportunities lost through want of provisions within these few days of cutting off the flower of the Brittish Army, in an excursion I think towards Chester. In short, our last advices say not a hoof of any kind was left & little or no flour. For the Lord's sake let us exert every nerve to save our Country, which must now be done by immediate supplies from this State until we get things into order. A late letter from France says the King had given orders to the Commissary of the port where two of our frigates were fitting to supply them out of his Arsinels. A frigate lately launched in France is also fitting. I am with great respect, Sir, Yr. most obt. huml. Serv,

Danl Roberdeau

RC (P<sup>Har</sup>H).

<sup>1</sup> For General Washington's December 23 letter discussing the deficiencies of the commissary department and the distressed condition of his troops, which was read in Congress this day, see Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:192-98; and *JCC*, 9:1054. For Congress' response to Washington's moving appeal, see Committee on Emergency Provisions to Thomas Wharton, December 30, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> For resolutions empowering Washington to impress supplies needed for the army, see *JCC*, 8:752-53, 9:905, 1013-15.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir, York Town 27th December 1777.

I beg leave to refer you to the inclosed duplicate of a Letter which I had the honour of writing to you the 23d Inst. transmitted by the hand of a Mr. Storer.

Congress having received from General Gates as intimated in my last, Copy of a Letter written to him by Lieutt. General Burgoyne in which this Gentleman declares that "the public faith is broke" &ca have taken this declaration together with his refusal, under an assertion not founded in truth, to give such descriptive marks of his Non Commissioned Officers, privates & other persons, as you had demanded, into their most serious consideration in a Committee of the whole House. These weighty & important circumstances after having long employed the close attention of a Select Committee has taken up almost the whole time of Congress for two days past, nor have the House yet accomplished all the solemn & necessary Resolutions which the Case demands, but have proceeded so far as to receive a Report from the Committee of the whole & to order me to Address you Sir, in terms of the Letter which you will find inclosed & of this which I am now penning; these will be followed as speedily as possible by extended Acts & Resolutions prepared for your further direction as well as for public information on both sides the Atlantic.<sup>1</sup>



John Burgoyne

It is the express desire & injunction of Congress that you do not communicate the contents of these Letters to any person until it shall become absolutely necessary, that is to say, until you shall have received the intended Acts & Resolves or until you shall have attempted & if possible completed, certain essential Acts, admitting the Vessels for transporting Lt. General Burgoyne & his Troops to be arrived at the port of Boston.

By essential Acts, Congress mean, that the Tonnage of the Transport Vessels & also that the Stores of provisions & Fuel should be particularly enquired into & ascertained to be in your judgement Sufficient for transportation & sustenance of the number of persons intended to be embarked for a Voyage from Boston to Great Britain & more particularly that all accounts be liquidated & the Amount due by Lieutt. General Burgoyne or as great a part of it as you can obtain actually paid in Gold or Silver according to the rate specified in the Resolve of Congress of the 19th Inst.<sup>2</sup> transmitted in my last Letter in order to reduce within the Smallest compass articles which may hereafter be made subjects for cavil & disputation by the Court of Great Britain, on whose honour & justice these States cannot at present with any degree of safety rely.

These Acts which Congress judge indispensibly necessary to be performed before an embarkation can take place, will employ some days & gain so much time without subjecting the honour of the House or of its Constituents to any unfavorable imputation from the World. You will also from what has been said perceive good grounds for renewing your demand of the Names & particular description of the Non-Commissioned Officers, privates &c<sup>a</sup> but it may be prudent not to press this unless by appeal to expected directions from Congress & to the conduct of Sir Guy Carleton in the Instance adduced by Mr. Burgoyne & permit him if he pleases to decoy himself.<sup>3</sup>

If When you shall have Sufficiently attempted or completed these necessary Acts you shall not have received the intended Resolves of Congress it will then be necessary for you to disclose the Contents of the Inclosed Letter to General Burgoyne & peremptorily to prohibit his embarkation until you shall have received further directions on that point.

You will understand the motive for dating that Letter January 1778 & leaving a Blank for the day to be properly & carefully filled by yourself.<sup>4</sup>

I have in conclusion to assure you Sir that Congress repose the highest confidence in your address & abilities for conducting with propriety this very important business, in which on one side the faith & honour of these Infant States are to be preserved & on the other the magnanimity & Resolution of Congress to be exemplified in guarding against frauds & deceptions of an Enemy who has hitherto



practiced without remorse every Act of violence, injustice & Cruelty in the prosecution of the present War.

I have the honour to be, &c &c,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Congress' elation over General Gates' victory at Saratoga had been tempered from the beginning by misgivings about the surrender agreement he concluded with General Burgoyne. Fearing the approach of British reinforcements, Gates had agreed to accept extremely generous terms to secure Burgoyne's surrender before help arrived. Under the terms of a "convention" signed by both commanders on October 17, Gates agreed, among other things, to permit Burgoyne's troops to lay down their arms by command of their own officers, to march out of camp with the honors of war, and to proceed under guard to Boston so that from thence they could be shipped back to England "upon Condition of not serving again in North America during the present Contest." Although Gates believed that under the circumstances he could not demand stricter terms, there was no denying the fact that prompt compliance with the Saratoga Convention would have enabled Burgoyne's army to return to England to free other troops for service in America for the 1778 campaign, nullifying much of the impact of the victory at Saratoga.

Unwilling to repudiate the convention lest this give offense to Gates and impugn the honor of the new nation, Congress from the outset was nevertheless determined at the very least to delay the embarkation of Burgoyne and his men. Accordingly, on November 8, little more than a week after first learning the terms of the convention, Congress ordered General Heath, the American commander at Boston, to take a census of Burgoyne's officers and men, thereby prolonging their stay in Boston. Then on November 22 Congress ordered Gates to investigate allegations that Burgoyne's army had failed to surrender all the arms, accoutrements, and colors required by the convention. Still, although these actions might detain the captured troops in Boston longer than had been originally expected, they were not enough in themselves to prevent their eventual return to England.

Congress was able to move from simply obstructing to effectively nullifying the Saratoga Convention as a result of an indiscretion by Burgoyne himself. Writing to Gates on November 14, Burgoyne complained that Massachusetts authorities had violated this agreement by failing to provide suitable housing for himself and his officers and charged, in a phrase he was soon to have reason to regret, that because of this "the public faith is broke and we are the immediate sufferers." This letter was read in Congress on December 18 and immediately referred to a committee of five. Eight days later the committee submitted a report to Congress, which then decided on December 27, in a committee of the whole, that it would be necessary to suspend the embarkation of Burgoyne and his men until the British court had ratified the convention. In justification of this decision an accompanying report cited several minor infractions of the convention but laid greatest stress on the argument that Burgoyne's charge that the public faith had been broken indicated a settled design on his part to renounce the convention once he and his men had left Boston. After further debate on the issue in committee of the whole on January 2 and 3, Congress officially resolved on January 8, 1778, that "the embarkation of Lieutenant General Burgoyne, and the troops under his command, be suspended till a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention of Saratoga shall be properly notified by the court of Great Britain to Congress," and approved a lengthy prefatory report justifying this action.

Congress' January 8 resolution was cunningly contrived. British ratification

of the convention in the manner Congress demanded would have constituted an acknowledgment of the legitimacy of Congress itself, which the British still refused to concede. Consequently, the agreement was never ratified to Congress' satisfaction and the so-called Convention Army remained in captivity until the end of the war.

See JCC, 9:880-82, 948-50, 1034, 1054-55, 1058-64, 10:13-14, 16-17, 29-35; Laurens to Heath, November 8, 1777, January 8, 1778, and to Horatio Gates, November 23, 1777; Janet Beroth, "The Convention of Saratoga," *New York State Historical Association Bulletin* 8 (July 1927): 257-80; Alexander Wall, "The Story of the Convention Army, 1777-1783," *New-York Historical Society Library Bulletin* 11 (April 1927): 67-97; and William M. Dabney, *After Saratoga: The Story of the Convention Army* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1954), pp. 7-26.

<sup>2</sup> See JCC, 9:1036-37.

<sup>3</sup> See JCC, 9:1060-61.

<sup>4</sup> This letter is printed below, under the date January 8, 1778.

## James Lovell to John Adams

[December 27? 1777]<sup>1</sup>

Decr. 2d.<sup>2</sup>

Resolved that a Commission be made out for Mr. J Adams similar to that heretofore granted to the Commissioners at the Court of France.

The date of the Commissions upon the 27th was an error of the Secretary. But He as well as the president & others think it of no consequence.

In Congress Decr. 17th. 1777<sup>3</sup>

Resolved that Genl. Washington be directed to inform Genl. Burgoyne the Congress will not receive nor consider any Proposition, for Indulgence or altering the terms of the convention of Saratoga, unless immediately directed to their own Body.

I cannot find the letter of the 14th of Novr. from Genl. W—— which contained the Copy of Genl. B——'s to him requesting permission for himself if not his troops also to embark at R. Island. You must be so kind as to acknowledge from Paris to Mr. Dumas the Receipt of the following.<sup>4</sup>

Copies of a Dispatch of the 14th of June	J	
Do	24th of June	K
Do	7th of July	L
Do	2d of Augst.	N

And you must mention to your Colleagues the impossibility of our making the interest of America coincide with Mr. De la Rocatelles<sup>5</sup> just pretensions to rank compared with those of some foreigners now in our service with whose conduct we are satisfied.

It is not possible to get the absolute order mentioned by Dr. Franklin while so much stress is laid by some upon a *genteel Figure polite*

address or to take up all a *fine* fellow. To say nothing of the honest Predilection of RHL and Mr. Presidt. L for Foreigners.

This Gentn. wants an advance to bring over himself, his wife, 3 daughters & a Son—and to be sure Servants in proportion. Be obstinate, my good Friend.

RC (MHi). In Lovell's hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> Although the exact date of this document cannot be determined, Lovell probably wrote it about the same time he penned a December 27 letter to Samuel Adams (which has not been found but whose receipt was acknowledged on January 10, 1778) and a December 28 letter to Richard Henry Lee. In the letter to Samuel Adams, Lovell had enclosed a copy of Charles W. F. Dumas' August 2, 1777, letter to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, which is also listed below. See Adams, *Writings* (Cushing), 4:8. Dumas' letter, Lovell explained to Lee the following day, contained "a long detail of Sam & John Adams's wife & children at the Hague," a scandalous accusation that Dumas wished to challenge in order to "undeceive our public & confound the imposture which characterizes impudent & base enemies." See Lovell to Richard Henry Lee, December 28, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> See JCC, 9:988.

<sup>3</sup> See JCC, 9:1032.

<sup>4</sup> The following letters of Dumas are in PCC, item 93, fols. 76–93.

<sup>5</sup> That is, Flöbergue de La Rocatelle, whose "memoir" had been laid before Congress on December 20. See JCC, 9:1040. Lovell wrote this paragraph in the margin alongside the preceding two paragraphs.

## Robert Morris to Benjamin Franklin

*Manheim in Pensylvania, Decemr. 27th. 1777.* "As Mr. Deane has been recalled by Congress, it is uncertain wether he may be in Paris when this arrives, therefore I enclose it to you, in order that you may read the Contents of a letter I wrote to Congress Yesterday<sup>1</sup> & of another to him of this date,<sup>2</sup> after which you will please to forward or deliver them to him. By these you will discover that I am intirely undeceived with respect to my Brother, & that so far from persisting in a defence of him I have determined to give him up entirely to his own Fate, those letters will inform you so fully of my sentiments, my conduct & motives that led to it, that I think it unnecessary to trouble you with any thing further on the ungratefull Subject, except to assure you, which I most solemnly do, that I blame myself much for having written that unfortunate letter of the 29th June to Mr. Deane, & more so for having given away to Suspicions that I am now perfectly convinced were injurious to you & him."

RC (PPAmP).

<sup>1</sup> See Robert Morris to Henry Laurens, December 26, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> Morris' letter to Deane of this date, in which he explained the steps he had recently taken upon learning of Thomas Morris' irresponsible behavior in France,



is in the Franklin Papers, PPAmP. Morris also used the opportunity to apologize for the criticism he had directed at Deane in his June 29, 1777, letter to him and to discuss the measures he was now taking to liquidate both his partnership with Thomas Willing and the financial obligations of Thomas Morris. Finally, Morris added the following postscript on January 5, 1778: "I am just returned from York & find your letter to Mr. Hancock had been read in Congress but not the Copies of your letters to me inclosed under his Cover, therefore I send the whole to the President this day by the Honble Mr. Duer."

For Morris' December 29 letter to Deane, which he devoted primarily to a discussion of the commercial ventures in which they were jointly involved, see *NYHS Collections* 20 (1887): 293-97.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Pensylvania Decr. 28. 1777

Your favour of the 25 ulto Came to my hand this Moment. I am Sorry to hear of the death of Our friends Mabson, Waldron & Cray. I have not received one line from Hooper or Maclain god knows when, I beg you will make Interest with One or both of them to write to me. God send Our Assembly may have wisdom enough to fortify their Sea Ports, this Policy has been adopted by every State in the union except No. Carolina, the ridiculous Jelousy betwixt No. & South has I fear hitherto prevented it, had this been done two years sooner, Our State would have been as well Supplied with Necessaries from abroad as Charles Town, which of late has been the great Mart for the Supply of the Southern & middle States. I send you papers & refer you to them for News. I beg you will not publish any of my Scrawls, they are not written for the Press. Besides I sometimes mention to you some matters which are not proper to lay before the Public; since I have seen extracts from my letters published in the Wilmington Paper, It has made me very Cautious in giving my Opinion to my friends under my hand.

Our Grand Army are in hutts for the winter about 20 miles from Philadelphia in Order to Cover the Country from the Ravage & devastation of the Enemy. It is hoped we shall be able to Open the Campaign early in the Spring with Vigour; should the Several States exert themselves to fill up their Batalions we promise Ourselves to have a formidable Army in the field well provided & well dissiplined. I wrote you some time ago that I was sorry you had meddled with Kannons Bills, you had better send them on, the longer they remain behind, the greater will be the difficulty in receiving payment. I would not at present Choose to put my Money to Interest. Mrs Harnetts receipt shall be Sufficient for any sum not exceeding my proportion which you may think proper to pay her.

I have not heard from Mr. Mitchel about Jackey, I desired he would send him to me, or let me know where I could send for him,

I am sure he will not be safe at Burlington this winter, I must have him with me unless you Contradict it in your next. His board & Schooling will be expensive to you any where in this Country, I think you had better let him Come home with me in the Spring. I desire you will be explicit on this Subject. I find you make a poor hand in the rum way. Jamaica spirits sells here at 80/, brown sugar 10/, Coffee 12/6, Lo Sugar 22/6. I shall take it as a favour if you will send me by the first Waggon Coming to this Town, 12 gallons Jama. rum, 1 Loaf Sugar, 12 lb brown & 12 lb Coffee, these articles would be a very great acquisition, the Sugar & Coffee Mrs. Harnett will supply you with, perhaps Coll Long can put you in the way to send these Articles forward, or some Colonel, or Other Officer in the Army; as recruits will no doubt be coming forward daily, pray do not Neglect this matter. Tell Mrs. Harnett (for I forgot to mention it to her) that 2 or three Gallons of Pickled Oysters would be the greatest rarity she could send me, I have not tasted One since I left home, also a few dried fish of any kind, a dozen or two, if they even Stank, they would be pleasing, I am heartily tired of eating the flesh of four footed beasts, we can get very little else in this Plentiful Country that *you* have so often praised & indeed bragg'd off. Beleive me it is the most Inhospitable Scandalous place I ever was in. If I once more can return to my family all the Devils in Hell shall not Seperate us. The honor of being once a Member of Congress is sufficient for me, I acknowledge it is the highest *honor* a free State can bestow on one of its Members. I shall be careful to Ask for nothing more, but will Sit down under my own Vine & my own Fig tree (for I have them both) at Poplar Grove where none shall make me afraid except the boats of the British Cruisers. I wish you the Compliments of the Season. Remember me particularly to all my friends, I have many left yet in my old age; tho' perhaps very few in my *own* Town; I love them notwithstanding, as well as ever; & may perhaps (in the Course of Gods Providence) have it in power to convince them that I deserved their Confidence. I do not blame them for their neglect of me, it proceeded from that noble independent Spirit I have for so many Years been Contending for, at the risque of my own domestic care, my private fortune, and what is much more valuable My *health*. What I have said is not intended to be shewn to any person, It is not my wish to remind any person of matters which have been long since done away. I am with sincere regard, Dear Sir, Your real friend & Ob Servt.

Cornl. Harnett

[P.S.] What is become of Capt. Allon? You have blamed me for writing you Short Letters, this I hope is long enough, if not, let me know. I have from this reproof of yours been led to mention old affairs Only to endeavour to fill up the Sheet.

## James Lovell to Richard Henry Lee

Dear Sir

28th Decr. 1777

I shall leave you to get news at large respecting our army, and the transactions of Congress, from your worthy brother, only saying as to the first, that the extremity of those injuries which were prophesied some months ago are now realized in the Commissariate; and that we also now find most of our high expectations from the expensive establishment of the Quarter-master had not a thorough foundation; Genl. W——n has made this evident, and shown it fairly to be the clue to unravel our many seemingly misterious past miscarriages in the Field.

As to the second I will remark that few in number we have vaste business, and tho' we have had particular reason to regret your absence & that of other antient members, we must & will go thro with what times and circumstances demand to be immediately done.

From me, you will chiefly look for foreign affairs. What I have before writtten did not fully destroy Bingham's narrative; what I now communicate goes near to do it; but it leaves our Intelligence from St. Pierre's Miquilon in good force. Private persons at Nantes Sepr. 5th might easily be ignorant of what Bingham might know thro a public chanel at Martinique Octr. 13th. But, Mr. Williams gives me the following in a private correspondence of Octr. 18th.<sup>1</sup> "The politics of this country seem still to be as from the beginning of the war. They rejoyce at every event in favor of America, because they wish to see their old enemy crushed, but *that* enemy is still so formidable to them that they do not seem inclined to lend an helping hand to us openly; and every peice of bad news from America, as it raises the tone of the English ambassador, increases their fears, and the effect is felt throughout all the seaports of the kingdom. We have lately had two Jamaicamen seized by the Admiralty, and I suppose they will be returned to the English. It is true prizes are still brought in & privately sold; but the purchasers, on account of the risque of having them given up, do not allow above 1/3 of the value. Thus, do the French merchants make great sums of money; and the policy of the nation goes hand in hand with the interest of individuals.

It is indeed pretended that matters will take a turn soon. The reason, they say, that war is not more thought of at present, is,<sup>2</sup> that their Fishermen & Baltic ships are still out: by the first they expect an additional No. of Seamen & by the last a full supply of naval stores which would be intercepted should a rupture take place now, but, that when these shall be safely arrived, they will hold a very different Language to the English. Two or three months will convince us whether these professions are sincere or not; but, I apprehend some singular success on the part of America would do more in our favor than any other Circumstance."



The Rawleigh & Alfred arrived at L'orient the 6th of Octr. Between that and the 15th they had suddenly sold two Jamaicamen for only 9,700 sterlg. as the other two at Nantes taken by a Massachusetts Capt. Kendrick had been seized. One Nicholson, brother of the Baltimore Commander, had a fine Frigate just launched at Nantes, of 24 Twelves on her Gun Deck & 6 Sixes on her Quarters, and would be at sea in Novr. with the other two which were hove down at L'orient, the Commissary of which port had orders from the ministry to supply every thing out of the royal magazines for Thompson & Hindman.

Poor Johnston was taken two days after he left Morlaix by a Cutter of heavier mettall than his, having fought 5 Hours, lost many men as well as his enemy and being towed a wreck into Dover. I doubt not our Gentlemen will exert every nerve to protect him from the malice which will be ready to show itself against him after his late successes in the Irish Chanel. Our old Holland correspondent gives us on the 2d. of Augst.<sup>3</sup> a long detail of Sam & John Adams's wife & children at the Hague, where it seems one or other of those Gentlemen was born & married, but forsook his wife & family to make his fortune in America. "Sr Joseph York knows this but pretends to be ignorant of it," say the Relations. "And tho'," says Dumas, "this is at bottom only a bagatelle, yet I wish to have some short account of the honourable persons of Mr Sam & Mr John Adams that I may undeceive our public & confound the imposture which characterizes impudent & base enemies. They decry you in Europe as Poltrons, and they at the same time pray & intreat the European Powers not to permit you to buy arms from them; and, while they fear they shall not be able to destroy Virtue, they seek to blacken & calumniate it."

"Let us pass," says he, "from this miserable tale to what is more important & more agreeable."

The Pri[n]ce of Waldeck has two fine Regiments of his subjects in the service of this republic the contract for whom is near expiring. The Court of London, knowing this pressed that Prince to let her have them; but he answered that he had proposed a new contract to their High Mightnesses and had demanded some conditions in his own favor to be added to the former ones; that if their H. Msses. would not consent to them, he would let the King have them upon the conditions last demanded; but, that he could not refuse them to the Republic if she preferred to keep them. Upon this, Sr Joseph<sup>4</sup>

RC (PPAmP).

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Williams' October 18, 1777, letter has not been found, but Lovell also discussed the intelligence contained in it in his second letter of December 23 to William Whipple.

<sup>2</sup> Lovell drew a hand in the margin at this point to draw attention to the remainder of this sentence.

<sup>3</sup> Charles W. F. Dumas' August 2, 1777, letter to the Committee of Secret Correspondence is in PCC, item 93, fols. 88-93.

<sup>4</sup> Remainder of MS missing.

## John Harvie to Thomas Jefferson

Dear Sir

York Town December the 29th 1777

Your Letter of November the 26th was handed to me by the post before the last. The great Objects of the Assemblys Deliberations are of the most Interesting Nature and I have no Doubt they will bring them to Maturity with their Usual Wisdom. If the late Generous Spirit of Virginia in their Act for Cloathing and Measures for preventing of Forestalling does not Inspire the other States with a Virtuous Emulation the Avarice of Individuals will be more Fatal to the Liberties of America than the Sword of the Enemy. I have a great while past Shudder'd at the Rapid Strides of this Monster in Society, but lately he has broke through every feeble Fort Opps'd to him, and threatens us with Inevitable Destruction unless his Carrier is Immediately Check'd by the joint Efforts of the United States. In Short the Avarice and disaffection of the people here is so great that they refuse any price that we can give for the Necessary provisions for the Army, and the Generals last Letter Couch'd in terms Strong and pathetic holds out a probability of the Armys Desolveing unless they are more fully and Constantly Supplied.<sup>1</sup> You would Execrate this State if you were in it. The Supporters of this Government are a set of Weak men without any Weight of Character. No kind of Respect is paid by the people either to their Laws or Advice, and instead of Checking they in many Instances Countenance the Exactions of their Constituents being otherwise fearful of looseing their present Shadow of power. Two thirds of the State of Delaware are Notoriously known in their Hearts to be with our Enemies. They have not at present the Shadow of Government amongst them and their Representation to Congress has been withdrawn a Considerable time before I had a Seat in it. From this you must foresee that these Execrable States Clogg the Operations of the Continent in an Alarming Degree. Then what is to be done? Are we with this Conviction upon our Minds to suffer them for the want of Virtue and Vigour in their Governments to Involve the whole in the Worst of Calamitys or will not Congress be Justifyable (from the Necessity of the Case as Guardians to the Sacred rights of the people at large) in persueing such Measures as will Eventually save this Continent from perdition? The feelings of my own Heart tells me they will. Yet I Revere the Sovereignty of the States and the Civil rights of the people as much as any man liveing who is not Capable of more refin'd and deeper reflections than myself, such I acknowledge see things of this Dilicate Nature in a more Enlarged Comprehensive point of View and by such I Ardently wish to be Instructed. Indeed my Honored Friend for such I esteem you, the present State and Condition of this Continent, Oweing to the Alarming disaffection in this Quarter, an Almost Universal discontent in the Army, a Reformation therein Meditated by Congress to Commence and be Carry'd into Effect this

Winter with Numberless other Matters that I am not at Liberty to disclose even to you, requires the Wisdom of the first Characters amongst us to give them weight and Efficacy. Then why cant some of those who so fully come under this Description be prevail'd upon to give their attendance in Congress if it was only for a few Months? I am sure you know me too well to Impute this Earnestness to Unworthy Motives. It arises from the purest Intentions for the Interests of my Country. It would be Stupid Vanity in me not to be Sensible of my own lack of Abilities to Constitute a Member of this August Assembly with Reputation to myself and Service to the publick, and other States in part of their Delegation equally Experience this Misfortune.

Your Supply of Cloathing came very Opportunely to Cover the Shivering Limbs of our poor Naked Soldiers. Thousands of them are now in the Hospitals for the want of even Wrags to keep them from the Cold. We hear Two Hundred thousand pounds worth of Goods (at Exorbitant prices) has been purchased in the Masachusets. We hope they will be soon forwarded to the Army.

There is no late Interesting Intelligence from either of our Army's. General Washingtons is now in Forge Valley about twenty three Miles from Philadelphia where they will probably remain Inactive the greatest part of the Winter. The Waste of the Enemy wherever they move is a Scene of Cruelty and distress. This dreadful Calamity is only Alleviated to the Whig by seeing the Torys property made one Common Ruin with his own, for all their late Ravages is Indiscriminate.

It would take a much wiser man than me to Unravel the Mysterious Conduct of the French Court. They have not yet given us any publick Avowal of their patronage. Our Commissioners are never Admitted to publick or private Audiences with their Ministers. What little Business they transact with them is by the Aid of a third person and their Scanty Supplies to us seem to be Conducted with Timidity Caution and Secrecy. Some Weeks past we daily expected to hear that they had taken a decisive part for us, but our last Letters Advise us Not to be too sanguine in our Expectations of Foreign Assistance but to place our Security in our own Resources with this only exception that a Capital Advantage over our Enemys in the Field may give a different Turn to the refin'd politics in Europe and Operate powerfully in our favour. This we have Obtain'd in the Surrender of Burgoyne of which the French Court are now or must Shortly be Acquainted. It is only to you that I Communicate any thing of this Nature that can have the least Tendency to Damp the Ardour or Expectations of our Countrymen.

I have wrote to a gentleman of my Acquaintance in Lancaster to endeavour to find out and procure the Workmen you desire if to be had in that Town, there being none such that will engage in this.



I have not received his Answer but have but little expectations from his Enquirys, as a Tradesmans prospects here is not a Moderate Compensation for his Labour. Nothing less than a small Fortune made without Merit or trouble will Content him. I am told there is amongst the British prisoners in Maryland or Virginia some expert Workmen of the Trades you want. I have written to the Commissary of prisoners to Acquaint me with their Names and the Places of their confinement.<sup>2</sup> My design after Obtaining proper Information is to Get a permission from the Board of War for you to Employ such of them as you think proper, which I shall in due time Inclose you. This I think will be the Cheapest and probably the most Convenient way for you to Carry on your Buildings but of this you are the only proper Judge. Drums for our Militia has been an Object of my Enquirys since I first came here. They are not to be had on any Terms whatever. Our State is at present unrepresented, Mr. Jones having left us a few days ago.<sup>3</sup> Our Assembly was kind to him. I wish they would Confer the same favour on another of their Servants. Indeed my Situation is disagreeable here besides you knowing my very Narrow Fortune may Imagine that sometimes the Cares of a Husband and parent tell me there is a duty oweing to them as well as to my Country. I beseech you not to Consider this Sentiment as arising from a littleness of Soul or a Sordid Spirit, but I could not be just to the Woman who from much higher Expectations devoted herself to me if I now altogether Neglected the Interests of her and the little pledges she has presented me with. The Complication of this Letter will Convince you of the respect I must have for the man to whom I open my whole Soul without Ceremony, Punctilio or Reserve.

Jno. Harvie

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's letters of December 22 and 23, expressing the army's dire need for immediate provisioning, were read in Congress on the 26th and Harvie was one of a committee appointed to consider the matter. However, this committee was discharged on the 29th and another, composed of the Board of War and three additional members, was given authority to respond to Washington's plea. See *JCC*, 9:1054, 1065; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:183-88, 192-98. See also Committee on Emergency Provisions to Thomas Wharton, December 30, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> The letters Harvie wrote in an effort to secure workmen for Monticello have not been found.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Jones had learned upon his return from Washington's headquarters that his request to resign his seat because of poor health had been accepted by the Virginia Assembly. He attended the Board of War meeting on December 20 but did not participate in the congressional roll call on December 27, and he apparently left Congress sometime during the interim. Harvie's comment that Virginia was unrepresented suggests that he wrote this letter before receiving the Virginia Assembly's temporary authorization for a quorum of two, which the Virginia delegates Harvie and Francis Lightfoot Lee laid before Congress later this day. *JCC*, 9:1047, 1056, 1064; and Joseph Jones to George Washington, January 22, 1778.

The Virginia Assembly had selected Thomas Adams to replace Jones on December 9, but he did not attend Congress until April 16, 1778. *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia* (Williamsburg: Alexander Purdie, 1778), p. 55; and *JCC*, 10:358.

## Henry Laurens to William Livingston

Sir

York 29th December 1777

The last Letter which I had the honour of addressing to Your Excellency was dated 3d Inst. & Sent to Camp for further Speedy conveyance, I am sorry to repeat that no Report has yet been made on your Excellency's Letter of the 11th November.<sup>1</sup> In expectation of receiving proper Commands on the business which that Letter treats of, I had deferred a few days transmitting the inclosed Resolve of Congress of the 9th which was soon rendered unnecessary by the arrival of Doctor Witherspoon & Mr. Clarke,<sup>2</sup> in the mean time Your Excellency's favour of the 10th Curr.<sup>3</sup> came to hand & was committed to the Board of War, probably in order to quicken that Board to make a Report on the business which had so long been dormant.

From the intimation which your Excellency has given in your last mentioned Letter I shall inclose with this Six Blank Commissions with the same number of Bonds & Instructions for private Vessels of War.<sup>4</sup> Your Excellency will be pleased to acknowledge the Receipt of these & transmit the Bonds when Executed to Congress. If more than these are wanted an additional number shall be sent immediately upon your Excellency's requisition.

Your Excellency will also find under the present Cover an Address from Congress dated 23 Inst. to the General Assembly of New Jersey together with an Act of Resolves of the 20th referred to in the Address which your Excellency is requested to lay before the Honorable House as early as possible. I have the honour to be with very great Esteem & Respect &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> In this letter Governor Livingston stated that he was unable to carry out Congress' July 31 resolves on "raising Recruits and apprehending Deserters" because of doubts "respecting the Securities to be given, as well as the money to be drawn for." The Board of War sought to solve these problems through a series of proposals in a report that Congress read on November 25 but did not act upon. Livingston again requested guidance from Congress on these matters in letters he wrote to Laurens on November 29 and December 11, and at length Laurens informed him on January 1, 1778, that on the previous day the board's November 25 report had been "recommitted with a charge to the Board to transmit the necessary explanation." See PCC, item 68, fols. 293-94, 297-98, 301; *JCC*, 8:593-95, 9:964-65; and Laurens to Livingston, January 1, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> This resolve had requested New Jersey, which was then unrepresented, "to send delegates immediately to Congress." *JCC*, 9:1013.

<sup>3</sup> In reality this letter is dated December 16. PCC, item 68, fol. 301.

<sup>4</sup>“I have lately had several Applications for Letters of Marque and Reprisal,” Livingston had written to Laurens on December 16, “but was never furnished by Congress with any Commissions either for that Purpose, or for Privateers.” Ibid.

## Robert Morris to John Brown

*Manheim Decr. 29th. 1777.* “I received your letter by Bob & Philip with its enclosures and have been made very unhappy by the receipt of these letters from France which give such a shocking account of my Brothers behaviour, that there is not a moment to be lost in displacing him nor a hope left of his acting better. I have now done with him forever. Mr Smith in one of his letters tells me he is gone not to return again; pray who are now the members of the Commercial Committee or is any thing done in a New arrangement of that department for soon as I can get time to settle the Accounts of the Secret Committee I shall probably have occasion to Correspond with them. I shall be obliged if you will take Hall & Sellers paper & send it to me Constantly.” Concludes with an explanation of an error in one of Brown’s accounts.

RC (NjP). Addressed: “To Mr. John Brown, Secy of Marine Commee., York. Free, R. Morris.”

## Daniel Roberdeau to George Bryan

Sir,

York Town Decr. 29th. 1777

I wrote Council two days ago to which please to be refered. Revd. Mr. Batwell on an application to be enlarged on security on his parole, accompanied with a certificate from his Physician that fresh air and exercise were absolutely necessary to his recovery, obtained the following resolution,<sup>1</sup> “That in the opinion of Congress the Revd. Mr. Batwell should be discharged out of confinement on his taking an oath of allegiance to the State of Pennsylvania; or on his refusal that he should be allowed to go with his family into the City of Philada.” The delicacy of interfering with this Act was agitated together with the very low condition of the pe[t]itioner whose life was reported to be in imminent danger, & might add to the number of marters in the esteem of the disaffected who interested themselves in his behalf, nevertheless the prayer of the pe[t]ition was not attended to, but the above alternative given, for Congress did not know how other wise to get rid of importunity and apprehended this Step from all circumstances would not be disagreeable to the State. I think the above resolve is a specimen of treatment Congress would wish to other disaffected persons in every State as was at large said



in debate, with much concern that decisive measures had not long since been taken with all Enemies to the Independence of America. A Committee are appointed to take into consideration the deplorable conditions of our army and to report tomorrow.<sup>2</sup> I make no doubt that the most vigorous measures will be recommended to be *immediately* taken, as without the army must disperse as mentioned in my last. My situation is extremely delicate on this occasion, the ruin of our Army, or the interference with the police of the State I apprehend will be the alternative set before me, under these circumstances I should be glad of advice or assistance. The House of Burgesses in Virginia have unanimously consented to the Confederation as handed to them with orders to their Delegates to confirm it on the 10th March.

I could wish the State could favr. their Delegates with Dunlaps paper constantly. I should be glad you would furnish me with the two or three last papers. Our State I understand have published a bill which I have not seen, respecting the measures recommended to the northward, and I am told have recited the recommendation of Congress which exposes the views of Congress, this was never intended and may frustrate their designs.<sup>3</sup> I am respectfully, Sir, Yr. most obt. humble Servt,

Daniel Roberdeau

RC (PHarH).

<sup>1</sup> For the case of Rev. Daniel Batwell, see Pennsylvania Delegates to Thomas Wharton, November 13, 1777. For his December 26 petition to Congress, which is in PCC, item 42, 1:153-57, and the action taken upon it the 27th, see JCC, 9:1055-57. His January 5, 1778, letter thanking Congress for his release and asking issuance of papers authorizing his passage within the British lines at Philadelphia, was referred to the Board of War. See PCC, item 78, 2:329; and JCC, 10:18.

<sup>2</sup> See Committee on Emergency Provisions to Thomas Wharton, December 30, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> No such publication has been found, and a recent search of Dunlap's *Pennsylvania Packet* failed to uncover any "bill" fitting Roberdeau's description in that paper. Burnett speculated that Roberdeau may have had in mind the Pennsylvania Assembly's resolutions of December 6 pertaining to the work of the committee of Congress appointed to confer with the general assembly, which are in PCC, item 69, fols. 457-59, and *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:66-67, but because issues of the *Packet* for this period were not "accessible" to him he could not confirm this conjecture. See Burnett, *Letters*, 2:601n.4. As the assembly's December 6 resolves contain no intelligence "which exposes the views of Congress," it seems probable that some other document was at issue or that Roberdeau's "understanding" was based on misinformation.

## Committee on Emergency Provisions to Thomas Wharton

Sir

War Office Decr. 30th. 1777

Congress have received such unexpected & distressing Accounts from the General relative to the Situation of the Army that they have appointed a Committee to fall upon immediate Methods for Supplying them with Provisions.<sup>1</sup> They are so much in Want of an instant Supply owing to Delays & Embarassments in the Commissary's Department & other unexpected Causes that however plenty we shall have them in future, at present at least a Removal out of this State must be the immediate Consequence of even a short Continuance of their present Circumstances. An instant Supply must be procured from this State for the Support of the Army until the Supplies expected from the neighbouring States arrive.<sup>2</sup> As it may give Umbrage to the Inhabitants the Committee deplore the Necessity *they* are under of sending Officers with Parties to collect such Cattle, Flour & Grain as the Army wants without the least Delay as the Crisis is too alarming to admit of the Business being postponed on any Consideration. It will be improper to communicate the real Situation of the Army but with the Utmost Prudence & Caution. Your Excellency will therefore judge in what Manner the Concurrence of this State is to be procured as their vigorous Exertions are necessary in Cooperation with those of the Committee who will, at least 'till they see the Business properly conducted as doubtless it will be by the Government of this State, be obliged to give Orders for the taking, conveying & driving all Cattle, Hogs, Pork, Flour & Grain fit for their Consumption to the Army the Persons employed for this Purpose giving Certificates to the Owners expressing as nearly as possible the Weight & Quality of them & agreeing to pay for them at such Prices as shall be settled by the Convention of Committees from the several States who are to meet at New Haven the 15th of Jany next agreeable to a Resolution of Congress of the 22d Novr last.

I have the Honour to be, with great Respect, Your very obed Servt,  
Francis Lightfoot Lee, for the Committee

[P.S.] The Committee request you will be pleased to inform them whether the Proclamation ordering the Inhabitants of York & Cumberland Counties to thresh out their Grain has been issued.

RC (NNPM). In the hand of Richard Peters and signed by Francis Lightfoot Lee.

<sup>1</sup> On December 29 Congress authorized a committee composed of the Board of War plus three delegates to take immediate measures to supply the urgent needs of the army, which had been graphically described in Washington's letters of December 22 and 23. However, the emergency measures ordered by the committee fell short of alleviating the army's distress, which had reached crisis proportions because of the virtual collapse of the entire system for collecting and distributing supplies to the army. JCC, 9:1065.



*Francis Lightfoot Lee*

Francis Lightfoot Lee



Although the source of many complaints since its creation in 1775, the commissary system had functioned reasonably well until Commissary General Joseph Trumbull had resigned and returned home in August 1777. His successor, William Buchanan, deprived of many of Trumbull's most capable and experienced assistants, who had resigned over Congress' refusal to base their compensation on a commission basis, struggled on with the system he had inherited, but it was clear by early autumn that sweeping changes were needed. The inherent difficulties in provisioning large numbers of troops were compounded by General Howe's capture of Philadelphia, Congress' flight to York, and the British army's competition for provisions from the region. Commissary reform and the general reorganization of army administration were delayed by Congress' slowness in installing new members of the reorganized Board of War. Expectations that the new board would play a large role in the solution of supply problems—visible in Congress' appointment of both former Quartermaster General Thomas Mifflin and Commissary General Trumbull to the new board in November—were ultimately disappointed because Trumbull's health prevented him from filling his post and Mifflin refused to respond to a call to join the congressional committee sent to Valley Forge in January to study the most pressing issues threatening army morale. Therefore, it was the old Board of War, which had been authorized on November 22 to continue the work of the War Office until the new commissioners arrived, that continued the struggle against the army's problems, acting either in its traditional capacity or as the nucleus of ad hoc committees like the Committee on Emergency Provisions. Although Gates and the new commissioners finally assumed leadership of the new board in late January 1778, clashes between Continental officials and Pennsylvania authorities further delayed new measures for effective provisioning of the army. See *JCC*, 9:953, 963, 10:47; Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton, February 17, note 2; and William Duer to Francis Lightfoot Lee, February 19, 1778. For the general breakdown of the commissary and quartermaster systems and background material on Congress' struggles to bring relief to Washington's beleaguered troops during their difficult winter at Valley Forge, see Victor L. Johnson, *The Administration of the American Commissariat during the Revolutionary War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1941), pp. 85–109; and Erna Risch, *Quartermaster Support of the Army: A History of the Corps, 1775–1939* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1962), pp. 29–37.

<sup>2</sup> In a letter to New York Governor George Clinton written at about this time, Lee, on behalf of the committee, requested that "all the cattle which can possibly be collected within your State forthwith [be] . . . sent forward under proper conductors to General Washington's Army without Delay, paying to the persons from whom the cattle are so taken as yourself and the Council of Safety shall deem reasonable, and drawing upon Congress for the necessary sums or giving them certificates expressing the quality, age and weight so taken as nearly as possible, which certificates will be hereafter paid at such prices as shall be fixed on by the Convention of the Committees of the States to be held agreeably to the Recommendation of Congress of the 22<sup>d</sup> Nov<sup>r</sup> last.

"The Committee have likewise to request that you will give your utmost assistance to Mr. J. Cuyler, Commissary of Northern Department in laying up plentiful magazines of Flour and Pork in such parts of the State as shall be thought best adapted for that purpose, and that you will likewise be pleased to co-operate for the same purposes with the Governor and Council of Connecticut who are desired to superintend the Commissary Department on the East side of Hudson's River.

"The Middle Department is exhausted of Cattle fit for the use of the Army, & the obstruction which have been met with in removing a timely and sufficient supply of Salt from the Eastern States have baffled all Prospects of laying in any large Quantities of Pork in the States of Pennsylvania & Maryland. Without

therefore the most Speedy Exertions are made use of immediately to throw in a supply of cattle to General Washington's Army and to lay up Magazines immediately the most fatal consequences cannot but ensue.

"The vigorous Exertions made by the State of New York at a period when the affairs of America wore the most alarming aspect, afford us the most pleasing assurances that at this Crisis their Exertions in the Great Cause will not be exceeded by any State in the Union which has been wrote to on this occasion by the Committee." *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts relating to the War of the Revolution, in the Office of the Secretary of State, Albany, N.Y.*, 2 vols. (Albany: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1868), 2:308-9. See also the committee's December 31 letter to Thomas Johnson.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

My Dear Friend,

30th December 1777.

I am now sitting both feet & Legs bound up in a Basket in the room where Congress meets—between the adjournment at 1/2 p. one oClock & meeting hour at 3—& where a scrap of somewhat will be sent for my repast to serve till tomorrow's breakfast. Perhaps two, it may be three, hours after dark I may be permitted to hobble on my Crutches over Ice & frozen Snow or to be carried to such a homely home as I have, where I must set in Bed one or two or three hours longer at the writing Table, pass the remainder of a tedious night in pain & some anxiety. I hear you reply—why faith if I was you I would resign the presidentship. Believe me my dear Sir that was my solid determination on the 2d or 3d day after my present troublesome companion had taken possession of me, when by reflective comparison with former attacks & making a proper allowance for the rigor of this Climate I foresaw a continuance of pain & Crippleism for many Weeks. I then dictated a Letter to be written to Congress expressing my apprehensions & earnestly intreating an acceptance of my resignation, an answer was returned by a Member, that Congress were not disposed to grant my request but would in preference to appointing a new President, address the Chair & Secretary during my unavoidable absence, this seemed & indeed was very kind & a little flattering—a Compliment which laid claim to my gratitude. I summoned patience & fortitude to my Aid, I adopted every measure I could think of in order to restore me to strength & abstained from every thing, except hard work, that could have the smallest tendency to impede my recovery—writing in Bed, & especially one particular Nights discipline when I kept the Pen in hand till one in the Morning & resumed it again before five, shook me. However on Christmas day I found myself so far releived from severe paine as to encourage hopes that three or four days indulgence would produce a little Strength in my Ankles, but late that Evening & again very early next Morning I received visits from a Zealous Member of Congress

pressing me if possible by any means to attend the House the 26th adding the request was made by desire of many Members not so immediately to the President as to a Member who solely represented a State, intimating that the business which I had set or encouraged to set in motion of the highest importance was to be agitated that it ought to be treated with the greatest solemnity in a full Representation. This address to a State, made an impression which would not have been felt, if it had been directed to the president. I knew the business, it had been the subject of my meditation & contemplation through Several painful & sleepless nights & Days.<sup>1</sup> Believe me my dear friend I have been obliged to pause here a minute to wipe away a falling tear which in my present low & weak state of bodily health, rose irresistibly with my reflections upon the great affair which I allude to, & to which my duty has already required me to affix my signature, a signature which will probably be brought before the Tribunal of the whole Civilized World. Possibly I may find my self at liberty to be more explicit to His Excellency the President—but to return—the Summons animated my Soul, which is more vigorous in my present condition than the Body. "South Carolina shall not be quite unrepresented, I will be carried into Congress." I was *carried*, two whole days trenching deep upon each Night were passed in a Committee of the whole, late last Saturday Night the business was so far matured as to enable me to dispatch a special Messenger immediately to Major General Heath at Boston.<sup>2</sup> These exertions have thrown me back I cannot tell how far, but I am in a condition which would meet more compassion were you present from you than it seems to do from myself. I attend Congress from the motive promised & while I can bear to be carried & to sit here, my State shall not be totally Absent. The great business is not yet completed on our part, God only knows what will be the final end of it.

I have laboured hard very hard to advance it to its present State, conscious that I am doing eminent service to my Country. If my Country Men shall be of opinion with a few in this House, who appear to me to be timorous dunces, I shall be very unhappy, but I shall ever enjoy that satisfaction which attends good designs, whether it shall be determined by the World to be good or bad, the Act is great & great good or Evil will follow as its consequences.

There are other matters of very momentous concern on the tapis which duty requires me to attend to, without regarding my own Ease & being here since 'tis the desire of Congress, I may as well sit president as any other Character. A good Seat near a warm fire must compensate for additional labour!—But there is my morsel—however before I lay down the Pen or suffer the dirty Towel to be Spread let me again recommend to you as an Assembly Man one moments reflection upon the Subject of Representation. O Carolina! O My Country, shame to you!—that in this great, this momentous Cause,



so few among your many worthy Sons are found Zealous Advocates—so very few of them will leave their yokes of Oxen, their pleasures, their emoluments & apply their Talents, their whole abilities to the one thing needful. You know I have always run the Line of true Liberty, parallel to that of the Kingdom of Heaven. Luke warm half way votaries are as unfit in these times to enjoy that, as such Characters were declared by the mouth of Wisdom to be for entring into this or in other words unfit for the great work of propagating & establishing Christian Religion, called the Kingdom of Heaven—1770 years ago—both require a readiness to renounce all other attachments. I say—that so many can contentedly & tamely look on, & behold their Country, their posterity exposed to the hazard of Ruin, & almost without an Agent to plead for them is a lamentable reflection. Where is the boasted Virtue of 1775—where are those loud pretences which were heard on the 4th June in the same Year<sup>3</sup>—did that mean nothing more than Tar & Feathers? But here come Members, tis impossible to proceed, self defence bids me resign the pen & take up the Spoon.

Now my Dear Sir, tis near 9 oClock P.M. just returned from Congress I'll add a word or two, before I lay down for you must know I am in Bed. I say where are the effects of our loud pretensions to patriotism which were heard three years ago. Do those good people who are now Eating & drinking & accumulating pelf by every possible means vainly think that with the 28th June 1776<sup>4</sup> all danger passed away. Truly, if we were to judge from appearances, they do think so, but alas! these are indeed vain thoughts. Gracious God interpose on our behalf & rouse my Countrymen out of their Lethargy. The most fatal error they could fall into—that of attending every Man to his private Interest—this Evil seems to pervade all Classes in So Carolina; we are lulled by a transient success into a Sleep of security which will produce our Ruin.

Were you a Witness as I am of the distresses of thousands in this State, where there are numerous Towns, Villages & Country farms to receive fugitives from the Conquered City, where also the Climate is more favorable to the human body & where there are no fears of Insurrections by Slaves, your heart would bleed as mine often does. I have neither skill nor Colour to give you a just representation. What would the Calamities of fugitives from Charles Town amount to if they were obliged to fly? Where would they fly to? You can feel an answer as I do—too shocking to rehearse.

Your neglect to keep up a proper Representation in this great Assembly the Congress, & a consideration of the Cause, the lust of Wealth & pleasure, led me in to this digression. To the same Causes, may be ascribed your almost total neglect of almost every essential Act for your defence which is loudly complained of by one or two of my Correspondents & which I too well know to be true. If

you proceed thus blind fate you will soon fall into a Pit of perdition, you will soon be without Soldiers. Your Enemies have Spies among you who transmit exact intelligence upon the Wings of Mercury. You will be attacked in an unprepared moment, driven from your Sea ports, into those distresses which we just now said were too melancholy to repeat.

You may if you please recruit all your Regiments & fill them. Tis the Duty of the Rich to fight, but if these will, because they are Rich, be exempts, they ought to give ample encouragement to those poor fellows who skreen their persons from the dangers & hardship to which a soldiers Life is exposed.

Fill your Regiments immediately or you will be undone—fill your Delegacy in Congress with able Men—able Men I say—no frolickers—no Jolly fellows—or you will be despised & you will have cause to rue your neglect—for me plead I beseech you that I may be permitted to render my best services to my Country at home. I humbly think I have a right to demand, & therefore whatever my friends may do on my behalf, I will not condescend to beg. I will not quit my Post although I have some grounds to fear I may perish on it.<sup>5</sup>

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> A reference to the debate on the Saratoga Convention. See *JCC*, 9:1054–55, 1058–64.

<sup>2</sup> See Laurens to William Heath, December 27, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> This was the date the South Carolina Provincial Congress had reconvened after learning about the battle of Lexington and Concord.

<sup>4</sup> The date of the battle of Sullivan's Island.

<sup>5</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Laurens to Gervais, January 30, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to William Livingston

Sir,

York 30th December 1777

I had the honour of writing to you Yesterday, & while my packet was lying to be called for by a Messenger who is to go early to Morrow from the Board of War your Excellency's Several favours of the 22d & 25th Inst.<sup>1</sup> were about 9 oClock this Evening brought to me. These shall be presented to Congress to morrow. In the mean time permit me to lament with your Excellency the deplorable Situation of our affairs in general. I have been long deeply affected from a consideration of the circumstances of our Sick & wounded Soldiers, our Officers & Soldiers in Captivity, would to God there were no other causes, melancholy as these are, for affliction in minds impressed by Sentiments of humanity & by the Love of Country. But alas Sir! your Excellency will be informed in a very few days that our whole System is tottering, & God only knows whether we shall be able to prop it up half the first Month of the approaching New Year. How affecting

indeed must this prospect be to Men, who although knowing the versatility of too many of their Country Men & foreboding the consequences, yet from a persuasion of the goodness of that great Cause in which America is now too deeply engaged to retract, have in defence of it, hazarded Estate, Life & what is nearer, the future happiness of Children. To trouble your Excellency with a detail of Alarms which I judged necessary to sound soon after I had the misfortune of arriving at the State House Philadelphia in July last, would savor of a vanity which I am sure has no place in my mind, but I had the mortification to find, I spoke to Walls, or gave offence to Individuals. I had no other consolation but that which arises from complaining & predicting to our constituents & particular friends—mine will soon have occasion to revert to my Letters of September. Excuse me Sir I intreat you, if from Sympathizing with your Excellency I have unwarily been led to say too much, but my heart is full, my Eyes overflow, when I reflect upon a camp 1/4th & more of Invalids for want of necessary covering—an Army on the very verge of bankruptcy, for want of food—that we are Starving in the midst of plenty—perishing by Cold, & surrounded by Clothing Sufficient for two Armies, but uncollected. Had proper diligence been used to draw Clothing from the Eastward & Soward those who are now naked & perishing in General Washington's Camp might all have been covered early in November. Thank God there is some hopes now of having this necessary work performed in a few Weeks. The loss of Men, from the deficiency in that branch, I fear has been & will be very heavy.

In an Act of Resolutions which I lately transmitted to General Washington, Congress very earnestly recommended the protection of New Jersey to His Excellency & the General has replied with that propriety & sensibility which is discernable in all his actions & expressions.

Your Excellency could not have adopted a more proper term for describing the late & present employments of the Board of War, & equally applicable to Congress in general. Their business has undoubtedly been & is very important & truly multifarious. They have not only the great outlines of public business to Mark but for some time past have been obliged to descend even to the executive parts of the Duties of Clothier General, Quarter Master General, Commissary General &c &c &c. Otherwise we should not now be tottering, we should be flat down. I will say nothing of what might have been saved or done had time been seized by the forelock.

I am with very great Regard

[P.S.] As this will go by a Messenger from the Board of War I think it will be best to detain him who came from Your Excellency three or four days, within that time other business may be matured.



LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Governor Livingston's December 22 and 25 letters to Laurens, the latter of which described in great detail "Abuses" in military hospitals, are in PCC, item 68, fols. 305-16. Congress approved a plan for "better regulating the hospitals of the United States" on February 6, 1778. JCC, 10:128-31.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

30th Decr. [1777]

Mr. Geary otherways engaged has given me the pleasure of forwarding this Intelligence from your friend Jefferson respecting the ready concurrence of the Dominion with the Articles sent lately to the States in a hope of cementing them together in a firm League.<sup>1</sup>

I am particularly rejoyced at this dispatch at this critical time when things appear almost despoiled in this neighbourhood. As a secret I tell you that there is the greatest risque that the army will be disbanded in a short season, for the Commissary's & Qr Master's departments are ruined. I hope Robt. Morris will take up the first himself immediately or as a Director; Buchanan is as incapable as a child and knows not how he can feed the army 3 Weeks from any parts, or how to feed them from day to day with what he has on hand. Mutiny is at present suppressed. The Clothier is little better & the Director Genl. of Hospitals is at his wits end. Trumbull would be deified if he was on the spot, send him from Boston if there.

The Board of War with military drivers are Quarter masters owing to the Imbecility of the Govt. of this State which must be changed after the present glaring conviction of its Impotence. If at any day it musters courage to legislate it finds itself without any executive. Yr. frozen fingered Servt,

J L

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Lovell was forwarding Thomas Jefferson's December 17, 1777, letter to John Adams notifying him of Virginia's approval of the Articles of Confederation. Jefferson, *Papers* (Boyd), 2:120-21.

## Committee on Emergency Provisions to Thomas Johnson

Sir,

War Office Decr. 31st 1777

Congress have received the most alarming Accounts from General Washington of the Distress of the Army for Want of Provisions. He expresses the strongest Apprehensions that unless an immediate

Supply is sent the Troops must either "*starve, dissolve or disperse.*" This Disaster is likely to befall us by much Distraction having prevailed in the Commissary's Department to the Eastward which has prevented a Supply of Salt expected from thence from getting forward in Time. The laying up Provisions has been hereby prevented & few or no Supplies of Cattle have been drawn from that Quarter. The Avarice of the People too has had no small Share in reducing us to our present Distress. A Committee is appointed by Congress to take effectual Means for preventing so fatal a Blow as the Dispersion or Dissolution of our Army would be to our Liberties. They have been obliged from the Necessity of the Case to give Orders for siezing all the Provisions in the Vicinity of the Camp in this State which will afford a small but temporary Supply. They have written to the adjacent States & earnestly besought their immediate Assistance. Much Dependance is placed on your Exertions at this important Crisis & the Committee need but state the Facts to induce you immediately to take Measures for the remedying the Evil. I beg Leave to suggest to you whether an immediate Seisure of all Cattle, Hogs, Pork & Salt in the State of Maryland is not indispensibly necessary & Certificates given payable by Congress to the Possessors.<sup>1</sup> You are the best Judge of proper Measures to be taken within your State & therefore the Committee will not trouble you with their Ideas of the Plan to be executed for procuring the Articles wanted. They are confident you will be as speedy as the Nature of the Case will admitt convinced that immediate Supplies can only be had from the nearest States & the Committee have taken Steps for obtaining Relief in future from those more remote. The issuing Commissary at Camp will receive any Cattle &c you may please to forward & the Commissary General of Purchases will take into his Charge on being informed thereof, all Magazines of Pork & Salt you may think proper to have laid up. All Drafts or Certificates (Duplicates whereof you will no Doubt be of Opinion should be lodged with you as Vouchers) given or drawn by your order will be duly honoured by the Treasury Board. I would beg Leave to suggest to you the great Difficulty & Danger in the Transportation of Provisions up the Bay in the common Mode & entreat the Use of the State armed Vessells for the Purpose as a similar Request is made to the Governor of Virginia.<sup>2</sup> It is impracticable to procure Provisions from the Southward without the Use of these Vessells. The Committee rely strongly on the Exertions of Maryland & Virginia in laying up Magazines for future Supply as well as obtaining present Relief. They have the most flattering Ideas of receiving that Assistance from these of which they have been unhappily dissappointed from other States, & must depend on them for their principal Supply.

I have the Honour to be, with great Respect, your very obedt  
Servt, Francis Lightfoot Lee, for the Committee

RC (MdAA). In the hand of Richard Peters and signed by Francis Lightfoot Lee.

<sup>1</sup> On January 7 the Maryland Council appointed cattle purchasers in Somerset and Worcester Counties and authorized them to seize cattle easily accessible to the enemy and to forward them to the commissary of purchases. *Md. Archives*, 16:456-57. See also the committee's January 17, 1778, letter to Johnson.

<sup>2</sup> The committee's letter to Gov. Patrick Henry has not been found, but Henry's January 20, 1778, response, reporting the purchase of 10,000 pounds of beef and pork and the seizure of 2,000 bushels of salt for the army, is in PCC, item 71, fols. 131-34. Furthermore, Henry stressed the abundance of provisions in northern Virginia, criticized the delinquency and inefficiency of the commissariat, and urged immediate reformation in that department.

## James Lovell to George Washington

Sir, Decr. 31st. 1777.

A Course of Disappointments has attended the Printing of the Journals of Congress. Good Progress was indeed making in Sepr. last when Mr. Aitkin had nearly finished a second Volume with December 1776. This Work has been sent out of the city of Philadelphia, and buried.

By all the Scrutiny I can make, I gain no other Knowledge about the Spot where the Books are deposited than a high Probability that Frederic Bicking a Paper-maker has the Care of them.<sup>1</sup>

Having tarried myself in Philada. after the other Delegates left it, I procured of Col. Hamilton a Security of some Waggon from Impressment for the use of Mr. Aitkin which he did not appear to me afterwards to have been spirited to make use of; and in Fact he remained in the City.

Bicking is an honest timorous Man and lives in the Neighbourhood of John Roberts a Miller 10 Miles from Philada. which Roberts is a Tory,<sup>2</sup> and yet tis probable his Team brought the Journals out for Mr. Aitkin.

I beg your Excellency to communicate these Circumstances to some active Pennsylvanian Officer, who, being acquainted with the Spot of Ground mentioned, will take a proper speedy Method of gaining the Journals & forwarding them to Lancaster or York. I imagine the Types are also buried at the same Place with the Journals. They would be a valuable Acquisition at this Time, tho' they are not absolutely necessary to carry on the Journals.

I am not insensible to the great Affairs which press your Excellency on every side; but, I really thought this Business of recovering the Journals was important enough to warrant the Freedom I now take of applying to you for Orders respecting the Pursuit of it. I had intended to do it in Person, but the Absence of three of my Colleagues and other Gentlemen has thrown such additional Committee-Business



upon me as to make it impossible to assure you, otherways than by a Letter, that I am, Your Excellency's Obliged Friend & Humble Servant,

James Lovell

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> On January 9 Washington reported to Lovell that the journals had been recovered and were being sent to York. See Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:288.

<sup>2</sup> Roberts was later convicted of high treason for attempting to enlist men for the British and was executed on November 4, 1778. See Gail S. Rowe, *Thomas McKean, the Shaping of an American Republicanism* (Boulder: Colorado Associated University Press, 1978), pp. 117-19.

## Henry Laurens to Baron de Kalb

Dear General,

York 1st Jany. 1778.

This Morning the Baron Holzendorff brought me the honour of a Letter from you dated 20th November probably intended to have been 20th December accompanied by a packet directed to Monsr. Le Compte De Broglie at Paris.<sup>1</sup>

In my present circumstance pained & fatigued by the Gout & very fully exercised by the Duties of my Office in Congress I am persuaded Dear General you will excuse the brevity of my present respects. If the Packet, which is no doubt of great importance, had not made a part of your charge, 'tis possible I might have taken the liberty to delay writing to you until I should find my self at a little more ease.

The Packet I shall recommend to the Special care of Mr. John Adams at Boston who is going in the Character of Commissioner from Congress to the Court of France. Should his departure be intended to take place at any distant period, he will send it by some early safe conveyance.

That part of your Letter relative to Baron Holzendorff I have Communicated to Congress, which, with a memorial from the Baron, is committed to the Consideration of the Board of War. The Board will probably make a Report in three or four days to Congress, the result of which I will do my self the honour of communicating in due time.<sup>2</sup> I am &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> In PCC, item 41, 4:30, there is an extract made by Charles Thomson of Kalb's December 20 letter to Laurens recommending Louis-Casimir, baron de Holtzendorf, to Congress' favor. Kalb wrote a lengthy report about the state of the American army to the comte de Broglie between December 12 and 25, which is in Friedrich Kapp, *The Life of John Kalb, Major-General in the Revolutionary Army* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1884), pp. 132-43.

<sup>2</sup> In his December 30 memorial to Congress, Holtzendorf, who had been serving as lieutenant colonel in the Continental Army, complained that his merits were

unappreciated and asked permission to return to France on condition that the delegates pay his traveling expenses, grant him a colonel's commission with full pay and perquisites, and indemnify him for the loss of his baggage during the retreat from Philadelphia. Instead of granting the baron's exorbitant requests, Congress granted him leave on January 30 to resign his commission and return to France and agreed on February 21 to recompense him only for his recent debts and his traveling expenses to France. *JCC*, 10:7, 105, 188, 235; and *PCC*, item 41, 4:27-29.

## Henry Laurens to William Livingston

Sir York 1st Jany 1778.

I had the honour of writing to your Excellency the 30th December. Yesterday a Report, which had been formed at the board of War some day in November on your Excellency's Letter of the 11th of that Month was made to Congress & recommitted with a charge to the Board to transmit the necessary explanation.<sup>1</sup>

Your Excellency's Letter of the 25th Ultio. & the State of the public Hospitals are under Consideration of a Committee of five, Congress seem determined to make every practicable improvement in that momentous concern.

Inclosed please Sir to receive an Act of Congress of the 31st December for promoting a speedy reformation in the Army in discipline & œconomy.<sup>2</sup>

Congress have Resolved a Months extra pay to Officers & soldiers now in Camp & also a new Regulation in the article of Rations, which it is thought will be very acceptable to the Army at Valley forge.<sup>3</sup>

I have the honour to be &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to Livingston, December 29, 1777, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> This resolve urged the states, in view of the need for military reform and the disproportion between officers and privates in the army, to "suspend filling up any vacancies in their respective regiments, until they shall hear further from Congress on the subject." *JCC*, 9:1073. Laurens also sent word of this resolve in brief letters that he wrote to Govs. Thomas Johnson of Maryland, Patrick Henry of Virginia, and Richard Caswell of North Carolina on January 1; to Govs. George Clinton of New York, John Rutledge of South Carolina, John Treutlan of Georgia, and President Meshech Weare of New Hampshire on January 2; and to Gov. Jonathan Trumbull of Connecticut on January 5. *PCC*, item 13, fols. 92-93, 98, 100-101, 110. The letter to Governor Henry also gave notice of the January 1 appointment of John Walker to replace Samuel Washington as one of three commissioners to Fort Pitt. *JCC*, 9:945-46, 10:9.

<sup>3</sup> See *JCC*, 9:1067-68.

## Henry Laurens to James Mease

Sir

York 1 Jany 1778.

Inclosed please to receive an Act of Congress of the 31st December relative to your department.<sup>1</sup>

Congress having been offered the preference of purchase of "Six Bales of Linens & Woolens" the property of Mr Cumberland Dugan of Baltimore which lye in a Vessel somewhere in the State of Massachusett have directed me to write to your Deputy Mr. Otis at Boston to embrace the offer & to take the goods into his hands which I shall do by an Express Messenger to morrow or next day & order him to call on you;<sup>2</sup> if you mean to write by him, please to prepare your dispatches to avoid delay.

I am with great Regard &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> On December 31 Congress issued \$200,000 to Clothier General James Mease so that his deputy in Massachusetts, Samuel A. Otis, could pay for clothing he had contracted to buy for the army. *JCC*, 9:1071-72.

<sup>2</sup> See Laurens to Samuel A. Otis, January 3, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to Robert Morris

Sir,

York 1st Janry 1778

This Evening I received in Congress & immediately Reported your very affecting Narrative under the 26th December.<sup>1</sup>

The Copies of Mr. Deane's Letters, have not as you have been informed, been read in Congress—therefore I am directed by the House to request you will Send them by the earliest opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

I am with great Respect.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See Robert Morris to Henry Laurens, December 26, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Morris to Benjamin Franklin, December 27, 1777, note 2.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York 1st Jany 1778.

I presume that before this can reach your Excellency, you will have received from a Committee of Congress consisting of the Board of War & three other Members, to whom your Excellency's Letter of the 22d December was committed, an account of the measures adopted & put in operation for better supplying the Army with provision.<sup>1</sup>



This Evening Your Excellency's Letter of the 26th December was brought into Congress & reported, & will have the desired effect.<sup>2</sup>

My present duty is to convey to your Excellency three Acts of Congress, which will accompany this. Vizt.

December 30th. A Resolve for granting one Months extraordy pay to the Officers & Soldiers now in Camp; for a new adjustment of the Officers Rations &ca.

December 31st. A Resolve for promoting a Speedy reformation in discipline & æconomy in the Army.

Jany. 1st. for preventing imposition in the payment of extra-Pay granted the 30th Decem.

I have the honour to be with great Respect.

P.S. Your Excellency will receive in three packets by the present conveyance 150 Blank Commissions.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> For Congress' response to Washington's December 22 letter, which is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:183-88, see Committee for Emergency Provisions to Thomas Wharton, December 30, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> In this letter Washington asked Congress to defer action on a dispute involving the rank of Gen. William Woodford and three other Virginia officers. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:208. See also John Penn to William Woodford, November 19, 1777; and Committee at Camp Statement, March 2, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Wharton

Sir, York 1st Jany 1778.

The last Address which I had the honour of making to the State of Pennsylvania was directed to the Honorable Mr. Speaker of the Assembly, having been advised to do so by the Delegates in Congress. This Evening I remarked a correspondence from your Honor to those Gentlemen introduced into the House.<sup>1</sup> You will oblige me Sir by an information of the proper Channel for transmitting public dispatches to this State.<sup>2</sup> And permit me at present the liberty of sending to your hands an Act of Congress of the 31st December for promoting a Speedy reformation in the Army in discipline & æconomy which you will be pleased to lay before the proper power &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 10:10; and *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:136-37.

<sup>2</sup> Timothy Matlack, the secretary of the Pennsylvania Executive Council, wrote to Laurens on January 6 that it "will undoubtedly be proper that all publick dispatches should be directed to the President of the Supreme executive Council of this State." *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:161-62.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir,

York Janry. 1st. 1778.

The year is rendered quite pleasing to me, in its beginning, by the arrival of your favour of the 6th of December, which assures me you were then in health with your lovely family.<sup>1</sup> May *part* of that happiness long continue! I say *part*, for I wish you may e'er *long* be in France, or at York Towne. Your aid has been greatly wanted upon a most important transaction. We have had a call for your Stores of Grotius, Puffendorf, Vattel &c &c &c to support reason & common sense or to destroy both, just as your Honour & Da—— & Du—— & Dy—— should interpret the text. I shall expect a long, long letter when the business which the bearer of this carries to General Heath shall have been communicated to you.<sup>2</sup> There are certain words which might be so used as to cause a vast expenditure of ink. For instance, Men may dispute a year about "*just* Grounds," and each remain of the opinion he first set out with. Calm posterity alone perhaps can make a faithful decision upon the weighty matters now in dispute between Great Britain and these States as to the *verum decens et honestum* with which they are conducted.

I do not mean by that remark to deprive myself in any measure of the advantage of having your *speedy* & free opinion of the business before hinted at.

The next weighty affair is to settle the army after such a conference and consultation abroad as may make firm ground for determinations here within doors. Much work is to be done in a short period. One month of winter is gone. Howe will have no embarkation of troops to make in the spring to impede his early operations; and more of our soldiers perhaps will be destroyed by the galenic than by martial [arts?] at this season. All possible [effort] therefore should be exerted to [fill] up the quotas by every state. Virginia will draught, and I hope the substitution acts will be repealed every where.

With the compliments of the day to your Lady & yourself be assured you receive not the product of meer custom from your affectionate, humb Servt.

James Lovell

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> No December 6 letter from Adams to Lovell has been found, but see Adams' letter of that date to Elbridge Gerry, in Adams, *Works* (Adams), 9:469-71.

<sup>2</sup> Lovell was referring to Congress' decision to prevent the departure of the Convention Army. For information on this point, see Henry Laurens to William Heath, December 27, 1777.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir,

York Janry. 1st. 1778.

As I send the inclosed for you to seal I must beg you would not only appropriate the intelligence which it contains relative to business, but also those parts which respect the *long* continuance of exquisite domestic days, and compliments of the day not connected with the insensibility of *meer* custom.

Your abilities are greatly wanted here in the *medical* committee. There is a certain house most virulently divided against itself, and the unlucky removals of the sick which have become necessary from the change of station made by our army, has furnished picturesque scenes to be displayed by the pen of a ready writer, who is too apt to attribute them to a different cause from what I have mentioned.

In short there is a standing enmity between R—h & S—pp—n which you must have observed yourself. The former indeed professes himself a “generous *Enemy*.”<sup>1</sup> In short every great Plumb pudding that Congress has ever made has produced quarreling & envy, more or less, on this & the other side of the water. Thos. Morris is dismissed by his brother’s request, upon full conviction of his ill behaviour. I before hinted to you some things from W.L. at Paris which shewed that the Commercial Agency was a slicing object.<sup>2</sup>

I duely notice your history of the different entry made into the Capital by 3 Travailers,<sup>3</sup> as I did also an account of a *Resignation* in Powars & Willis’s Gazette<sup>4</sup> of Decr. 4th. Risible faculties were given to man for wise purposes without doubt. I have let them have full exercise on this occasion, let who will be vexed or sorry, with the correspondent of the Gazetteer’s mentioned!<sup>5</sup>

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> The simmering feud between William Shippen, director general of the medical department, and Benjamin Rush, physician general for the middle department, became a public affair when Rush’s highly critical letters to William Duer of December 8 and 13, 1777, were read in Congress on January 1. The committee appointed this day to consider Rush’s letters and recommend measures for the relief of the sick probably would have attempted to close the rift between the two men, but Rush continued his open attack on the management of the medical department and proceeded to accuse Shippen of corruption. Shippen in return mustered his own public and private defense. On January 27 a committee, which included Lovell, was appointed to consider Rush’s charges of Shippen’s mismanagement and corruption. After the committee had heard direct testimony from both men, Chairman John Witherspoon apparently urged Rush to resign and implied that the medical department would not be reformed according to his recommendations. Consequently Rush resigned on January 30 and was replaced by Shippen’s ally William Brown. See *JCC*, 10:9, 23, 60, 92–94, 101, 131; John Witherspoon to Benjamin Rush, February 2, 1778; David F. Hawke, *Benjamin Rush, Revolutionary Gadfly* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co. Inc., 1971), pp. 208–23; and Randolph S. Klein, *Portrait of an Early American Family: The Shippens across Five Generations* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), pp. 192–95.



<sup>2</sup> On the dismissal of Thomas Morris, see Committee of Commerce to Thomas Morris, December 17, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> Lovell was referring to the return to Massachusetts of John Adams, Samuel Adams, and John Hancock, for which see Lovell to Samuel Adams, December 8, 1777, note 4.

<sup>4</sup> *The Independent Chronicle* (Boston).

<sup>5</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Lovell to Samuel Adams, January 3, 1778.

## Charles Thomson to Robert Morris

Dear Sir,

Jan'y 1, 1778

I am astonished Mr Brown<sup>1</sup> could have so far mistaken me as to inform you that the letters from Mr Dean to you were read in Congress. As the president was absent, the comee on foreign affairs delivered me a letter in the Evening directed to Mr Hancock which I opened & found under the cover a letter to him & one to you unsealed. Next Morning I carried it to Congress & consulted Mr Lovel & he concurring in opinion with me that the letter was of a private nature I sealed that for you without shewing it to any person & sent it down to Mr Brown, who I was told was forwarding dispatches to you. I think on the same day in the evening before Congress rose other dispatches were brought and among them a duplicate of that I had sent you; upon opening the packet I informed congress it contained a private letter to Mr Hancock & one to you. Some of the members however required that the letter to Mr H should be read which was done. The circumstance of yr letter being open was not attended & an objection was made to opening that for you, upon which I put it in my pocket & upon calling at Mr B lodging's after Congress rose I found your servant was in town upon which I sealed the letter in the cover & desired Mr Brown to inform you, As I had not time to write, that the letter directed to Mr H only was read but that to you was not Opened nor read.<sup>2</sup> But as some intimations were thrown out of T.M.'s ill conduct, I desired Mr Brown to mention to you it was my opinion you should come to town. I believe the C. are perfectly satisfied with yr. conduct, but I could have wished you had known these circumstances before you wrote, that if there are any circumstances in letters you recd. as from your letter to C. I think there must be which wd. give you pain to expose to public view, you might, if consistent with honor, have kept them back.

I am, Sr, Yr humble servt.

FC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> John Brown, the Marine Committee's secretary, not the John Brown who in November had conveyed the Howes' peace feeler from Philadelphia to York as Burnett suggested. See Henry Laurens to George Washington, November 19, 1777, note 1; and Burnett, *Letters*, 3:1.

<sup>2</sup> For Morris' response once he learned of his misunderstanding on this point, see his January 5 letter to Henry Laurens.

## Nathaniel Folsom to Josiah Bartlett

Dear Sir

York Town Jeneuary 2d. 1778

Yesterday I Recd. your Feavour of Decmber the 12th. As to the Resolution of Congress you first mentioned, so far as it Relates to Newhampshier or general Stark, it wase Strenously apposed by your Delegates in Congress, and Six Days did not Pass before they were Convinced of the good Effect of the orders of your Court given to general Stark and every mouth wase Stopt, which gave your Delegates no Small triumph, to be told we ware true Prophets, and ever Since the State of Newhampshier has been in grate Repute, on account of the Spirited Exertions of the officers & Soldiers in the northern Department.<sup>1</sup>

As to the Promotion of Coll. Willkinson, who at the Request of general Gates Recd. a Brevet as a Brigadier general which you Say has given you Pain I most Sincerly Simpothise with you, and Can Say it has given me Senceble Pain ever Since it was Done. I was glad he asked no more at that time, for assured I am that if he had it would have been granted. Whilst they ware Rejoicing for the goodness of God in Delivering our enemies into our hands: a Plan is laid by Sundrey members of Congress which I belive will be Carried to Remove him out of the way by appointing him Secretary to the Board of War or by Sending him to Gorgia.<sup>2</sup>

You ask me how I Could be Induced to Disgrace all the field officers in the northern army to which I answer if when you Say you if you mean Congress I will not answer for them, haveing Constantly opposed the makeing allmost all the general officers that have been made since I have been here, it appearing to me they were made more upon the Principle of Intrest or frindship, then Justice & equity, and the Consequencies that have followed has Confirmed me in that opinion. Grate uneasiness in the army has been the Sure and sertaine Consequence of the appointment of allmost Every general officer Since I have been here.

If you meen me Personally Considerd, and think you Could Do better hope you will in twenty four hours after Reciveing this mount your horse & Come and Relieve me. And if you think you Cant Do so well would not have that Stop you as I have worne allmost all the flesh off my Bones being Exercised in my mind night & Day, and no time to Relax. My Predecessors in Congress made some alterations in the Commissary generals Department in the middle of a campaign which has given us an infinite Deal of trouble and the most fatel Consequences were not only to be feared but in Some measure have taken Place. The army Severel times were with out Bread for thirty Six hours at a time. This together with the Quarter master general being Sick and his Department thrown into Confusion, and the inhabitants of this State in general being unfriendly to the Cause in which the United States are Ingaged, has given us more trouble and

taken up more time then all the Rest of the Business done in Congress. But the Schuyler Party having left Congress in Part and many of the old members gone home hope we Shall git Right again soone.

I Wood not have you think by any thing above Expressed I take the least Exception to any thing you have Said as I love Plaine Dealing Best.

Inclosed I Send you the Confederation and all the news I Can git which is Very little. I am with Respect your frind & Humble. Sert.

Nathel. Folsom

P.S. Be so good as to let majr. Phillbrock Know I have Recd. his letter and will answer it as Soon as I Can. On my Joi[n]ing the Congress, I laid his Brother's Effairs before them and it was by them referred to the treasury Board and alltho I am one of them have not yet been able to git them to Report upon it to Congress. There being many applications simmler to it they turne me off by telling me there must be a Day Set a part for the takeing the whole of them up, is all I Can yet git from the Board. But I shall harass them while here on the Subject.<sup>3</sup>

N F

Coll Scammell is appointed adjutant general.<sup>4</sup>

RC (NhD).

<sup>1</sup> Gen. John Stark's refusal to serve under a Continental Army commander and Congress' response are discussed in George Frost to Josiah Bartlett, August 19, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> James Wilkinson was elected secretary to the Board of War on January 6, and President Laurens notified him of his appointment in a brief note written the following day. *JCC*, 10:21, 24; and *PCC*, item 13, fol. 114.

<sup>3</sup> For further information on Joseph Philbrick's petition to Congress for money to replace his Continental dollars destroyed by fire, see Folsom to Meshech Weare, July 26, 1777, note 2.

<sup>4</sup> Folsom wrote this sentence in the margin of the first page of this letter. Alexander Scammell was not chosen adjutant general of the Continental Army until January 5, 1778. *JCC*, 10:21.

## Henry Laurens to the Eastern Navy Board

Gentlemen,

York 2d Jany 1778

Inclosed you will receive an Act of Congress of the present date by which it is Resolved that Capt. Esec Hopkins be dismissed from the Service of these States.

By order of the House I have transmitted a Copy of the Act to Capt Hopkins. You are desired Gentlemen to cause that Act to be published in the Boston & other Eastern News-papers & to give



proper notice of the dismissal to the Several Commanders of State Ships of War in your department.

I am with great regard &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

## Henry Laurens to Esek Hopkins

Sir, York 2d Jany 1778

I am directed by Congress to forward to you the inclosed Act of the present date, by which it is Resolved that you be dismissed from the service of these States.<sup>1</sup>

The task is painful but duty obliges me to intimate that [*it*] is expected you will pay proper obedience to the Resolution. I am &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> For the circumstances leading up to the dismissal of Commodore Hopkins, who had been under suspension as commander-in-chief of the Continental Navy since March 26, 1777, see Thomas Jefferson's Notes on the Inquiry into Esek Hopkins' Conduct, August 12, 1776; and Marine Committee Examination of John Grannis, March 25, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de La Rouerie

Sir, York 2d Jany 1778

Had your business depended Solely on me for an answer or dispatch you should not have had occasion to call on me a second time, I move only as I am ordered & Congress from a multiplicity of employment cannot move quite so rapidly as many individuals seem to wish, however Sir your Letter which I received this Morning together with your late proposition were brought on the tapis & committed to the Board of War,<sup>1</sup> when a Report ascends from thence & any Resolution shall be matured, you shall be further informed by, Sir, Yours &ca.<sup>2</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> In his December 27 letter to Congress, Charles Armand-Tuffin, marquis de La Rouerie, proposed the creation of an independent corps made up of Frenchmen as well as enemy deserters and prisoners of war with himself in command. PCC, item 164, fols. 366-70. Congress eventually authorized him to raise such a corps on June 25, 1778. See *JCC*, 11:642-45.

<sup>2</sup> This day Laurens also wrote a brief letter to Jean-Louis-Ambroise de Genton, chevalier de Villefranche, enclosing a January 1 resolve which appointed him "an Engineer with the Rank of Major in the Army." PCC, item 13, fol. 98; and *JCC*, 10:7.

## John Penn to Jethro Sumner

York, Jan. 2, 1778.

Colo. Martin having been charged with want of courage soon after the Battle on the Brandywine, the Delegates for No Carolina, wrote to that Assembly requesting that they would recommend such of their officers, as they thought proper to be appointed General Officers, as they did not think it prudent to raise Colo. Martin. We have expected an answer for some time past, and think it would be wrong to do any thing on that head before we hear from the Genl. Assembly. I make no doubt of your being one; do be so obliging as to let me know as a Friend whether the adding Colo Clark would give any dissatisfaction to the officers as he is an old officer & said to be a man of merit.<sup>1</sup>

MS not found; reprinted from extract in *Stan V. Henkels Catalog*, no. 969 (November 12 and 13, 1907), item 126.

<sup>1</sup> Jethro Sumner (ca. 1733–85), North Carolina planter and tavern keeper, was colonel of the Third North Carolina Battalion at Valley Forge. *DAB*. See also Cornelius Harnett to Thomas Burke, November 13, 1777, note 2.

## Henry Laurens to Nicholas Cooke

Sir,

York Town 3d January 1778

Since my last of the 23d December I have had the honour of your favour of the 8th November,<sup>1</sup> which had been a very long time on its passage, it reached me no sooner than the 31st December & although I presented it immediately to Congress, no order has been made upon it. The House have been for many days past laboriously engaged not only in matters of the very highest importance within their proper sphere, but also obliged from some unaccountable deficiency in the several departments of Quarter Master General, Clothier General & Commissary General to interfere immediately & personally in the procuring Waggon, Clothing, Meat & Flour for the Army which otherwise from all appearance & from the Representation of the General, would have been dispersed. The deplorable state of the Hospitals has likewise demanded the same degree of attention. These burthens, which may truly be marked as extraordinary & unreasonable, fall heavy upon a very few Members from 17 to 21, who faithfully attend their duty at the expence of domestic happiness & the improvement of their private Estates. Your Excellency from a consideration of these circumstances will account for what might in a time of more regularity & tranquility be deemed a neglect of your very Interesting & affecting Address—and I beg you will be assured Sir,

I will embrace the earliest proper opening for bringing the State of Rhode Island into view again.

Inclosed Your Excellency will receive an Act of Congress of the 31st Ult. for promoting a speedy reformation in the Army which you will be pleased to lay before the Council. Also a Letter directed to Capt Esec Hopkins containing an Act of Congress dated yesterday, by which he is dismissed from the service of these States; I have sent the Letter under a flying Seal for Your Excellency's perusal & that you may cause the Resolve to be made public & particularly notified to all Continental Officers heretofore subject to Capt Hopkins's Command. You will after such measures are effected be pleased to close the Letter & order it to be carefully delivered. I have the honour to be with great Regard, Sir, Your Excellency's Most obedt servt,  
Henry Laurens, Presidt. of Congress

RC (R-Ar).

<sup>1</sup>This letter, which Governor Cooke signed in his capacity as president of the Rhode Island Council of War and which described the clothing needs of the state's Continental battalion, is in PCC, item 78, 5:115-17, and William R. Staples, *Rhode Island in the Continental Congress, 1765-1790* (Providence: Providence Press Co., 1870), pp. 154-55.

## Henry Laurens to the Chevalier de Kermorvan

Sir,

York 3d Jany 1778

The Letter which you Sent to me in Congress this Evening I presented immediately to the House, where your former had been reported with the Same attention.

Congress have directed me to inform you of their determination not to appoint you a Brigadier. However unwelcome this Resolution may be the early notification will save you the trouble of further suspense, from that consideration I have transmitted it without delay.<sup>1</sup> I am Sir &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup>Neither the letter of the chevalier de Kermorvan, a French volunteer serving in the Continental Army as an engineer with the rank of lieutenant colonel, nor Congress' action on it is mentioned in the journals. Congress also read a letter from Kermorvan on December 22, but it too is not in PCC. For further information on Kermorvan, see Benjamin Franklin to Benjamin Rush, June 26; John Hancock to the Pennsylvania Committee of Safety, June 28, 1776; and Laurens to Kermorvan, January 6, 1778.



## Henry Laurens to James Mease

Sir,

3d Jany 1778

Inclosed you will receive a Warrant on the Loan Office Massachusett Bay of 31st December for two hundred Thousand Dollars for the use of Samuel Allen Otis Esqr. which should have been Sent to you in my late Letter of 1st Inst. but it had not then been returned to me from the Treasury Board. I shall direct the Messenger to call on you with this & to wait a reasonable time for your dispatches. From Mr. Otis's representation the Loan Office Massachusett is not always a certain fund, therefore in order to enable him to make purchases upon the best terms, I am directed to give him permission to draw on you on public Account when he cannot raise Cash by other means. You are desired to direct him to transmit regular advices & to specify the value received for each draught or the immediate prospect of purchase which shall have induced him to draw. I am with great respect &ca.<sup>1</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter to Clothier General Mease on January 7, transmitting a January 7 resolve "directing Supplies of necessary Clothing to the Sick & recovering Soldiers in the Hospitals." PCC, item 13, fols. 114-15; and JCC, 10:23.

## Henry Laurens to Samuel A. Otis

Sir,

3d Jany 1778

Your Several Letters of the 26th & 29th November & 8th Ultio. have been duly reported to Congress & as far as I can judge, the House is well satisfied with your endeavors to serve the public.<sup>1</sup> The permission which you will receive to draw for sums when necessary, will shew the confidence which is reposed as well in your integrity as in your diligence.

Inclosed you will receive an Act of Congress of the 31st Ultio. directing you to pay & upon what terms for such Clothing as you have actually received, earnestly recommending to the Legislature of Massachusett to seize the residue which you had agreed for but could not get possession of without complying with such demands as appear to Congress exhorbitant & intollerable—for Issuing a Warrant on the Loan Office in your State for 200,000 Dollars to be deposited in your hands & lastly directing the Clothier General to authorize you to draw Bills on him in failure of proper supplies from the Loan Office.

The two first branches of this Act you are enjoined to keep secret until the expected operations of the Council or Assembly of Massa-

chuset shall be carried into effect which it is hoped will immediately follow the receipt of the Copy which will be transmitted with this.

I have forwarded the Warrant for 200,000 Dollars to Mr. Mease & ordered this Messenger to wait a reasonable time at Lancaster for his dispatches to you. Should any delay happen from his absence or other cause you may nevertheless proceed upon the ground of this authority to purchase & to draw Bills for raising Cash when Money cannot be procured from the Loan Office which you will always make your first resort. You will also always give advice of your draughts & specify the Value or consideration received or expected for each. I am with great regard.

P.S. You will with the paper above mentioned receive inclosed a Letter from Mr. Cumberland Dugan to the Commercial Committee to which you are referred. You will endeavor to get the Six Bales of Linens & Woolens therein mentioned into your Custody for public use, agree for such price as you can, or leave that to the Committee after you shall have transmitted a clear account of the quantities & qualities of each sort.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> These letters from Otis, Clothier General James Mease's deputy in Massachusetts, are in PCC, item 78, 17:33-36, 270-75. See also *JCC*, 9:1022, 1031, 1033, 1042-47.

## Henry Laurens to Robert Treat Paine

Sir, 3d Jany 1778.

The last Letter which I had the honour of writing to you was dated the 23d Ulto. & sent by Messenger Storer.

Inclosed with this you will receive an Address from Congress of the 31st Ulto. to the Legislature of Massachuset & also an Act of the same date particularly referred to in the Address. I likewise inclose a Letter directed to Samuel A. Otis treating principally of the subjects contained in the above mentioned Address & therefore I judge it proper to pass the Letter through your hands.

I have further in charge to transmit to you, to be as early as possible laid before the proper branch of Government, another Act of Congress of the 31st December for promoting a speedy reformation in the Army, which with the papers before recited you will receive in the present Cover. I have the honour &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

## Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Jr.

Sir

3d Jany 1778.

I was last Night honour'd with your favor of the 15 December & this Morning the Contents were taken under consideration in Congress by reference to the Board of Treasury, the result is, to return again the duplicate Warrant of the 16th Octobr. which you will find here inclosed & are desired to hold it in your custody until there shall be Cash in the Massachuset Loan Office for supplying the Amount which the Treasury are assured will by partial payments be computed at no very distant period. In the mean time a like Sum of two hundred Thousand Dollars will be conveyed to you under direction of the Board of War in the most expeditious manner. Upon this foundation you will probably be enabled to raise Money for Current demands & to avert those Evils which had justly alarm'd you.<sup>1</sup>

I recommended some Steps in Philadelphia for securing a return of our Emissions of paper into the Treasury by quicker progress than we have experienced, time & circumstances have confirmed my sentiments yet, tis the judgement of a Majority to proceed in the old way & even to prefer new Emissions, in private I lament this determination as a pernicious error, but I ought modestly to suppose my Self in error.

We are approaching to a Crisis, in this moment it becomes every freind of the great cause in which we are engaged to improve to the best purpose such measures as are adopted & giving up his private systems with the most absolute disinterestedness to exert himself for supporting the public Credit.

I am with great Regard &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> In his December 15 letter to Laurens, Trumbull, the deputy paymaster general in the northern department, explained that the Massachusetts loan office had been unable to honor a warrant from Congress for \$200,000. See PCC, item 78, 2:542; and JCC, 9:809, 10:14-16.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Janry. 3d [1778]

Hopkins has never made any application for tryal since he was furnished with the charges causing his suspension; and as we have no service for him, Œconomy called for his dismissal which was the work of yesterday.<sup>1</sup> How comes it that we have not to this day any account of the R Island sham Expedition?

Seven Delegates are chosen in our State; which intelligence



reached York the 1st, your *modest* brethren having kept at their lodgings in the morning for want of it.<sup>2</sup> Are the powers the same as last year? do 2 make a representation? Not a syllable of this is signified by the vote transmitted. We shall stand a scrutiny when C——e returns from Maryland.<sup>3</sup> I think we want Ammunition against his attacks.

I shall Strive to get the Journals in print for the last year without waiting for the recovery of those which are buried, though I hope for it from steps wch I have already taken. I shall have little time for scribbling to my friends when engaged about the press on these short days, after assembling twice for we have got to that again after having been driven from it for a season by those who now profess to be *convinced* of its utility.

I mentioned to you before you left York that I hoped you would persuade the printers to give us the papers. The only way to get them safely along thro' Thieves is to put them up in letter Size with a wafer instead of paste.

I am sincerely and affectionately, Yr humb. Serv.

James Lovell

RC (NN). A continuation of Lovell to Samuel Adams, January 1, 1778.

<sup>1</sup> See Henry Laurens to Esck Hopkins, January 2, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> For the credentials of the Massachusetts delegates, see *JCC*, 10:10, 26-27.

<sup>3</sup> That is, Samuel Chase.

## William Ellery to Nicholas Cooke

Sir, York-Town Pennsylvania Jany. 4th. 1778.

I very lately received a Letter from Mr. Marchant in which he informed me that our State was at so great an expence, and so deeply in debt that he was afraid we should be obliged to emit more money, or reissue that which will be collected by taxation; unless a warrant could be procured from Congress upon the Loan-Office for a large Sum; and proposed to me to make an Application therefor. If the General Assembly should think proper to give me any directions on this head I will execute them with the greatest cheerfulness, and not without hopes of Success; provided Loan-Office Certificates can be negotiated, and will answer in Payment of our Debts. The demands upon the Treasury are at present so great and pressing, that all the *Money* now in it, and which may be collected by the Loan-Offices for some time to come will not I am afraid satisfy them; but if Loan-Office certificates will answer our purpose it is my Opinion that Congress would grant Warrants for them to a considerable amount, rather than we should be obliged to emit or reissue Money. In the

Letter which may be wrote to me on this Subject they will doubtless place the necessity they are under to make an Application in a strong and striking Point of Light.<sup>1</sup>

The Committee which was appointed to examine the Journals of Congress and report the Resolutions which have passed respecting the Defence of our State, and recommending an attack on Rhode-Island have not yet reported, but I cannot entertain any Doubt but that Congress will determine the Expence of the late inglorious expedition to be continental when the Committee shall have reported. Perhaps it would be best not to apply to Congress for a Warrant on the Loan-Office 'till that matter shall be decided; as a great part of the Expence for the defraying of which a warrant may be desired may have accrued by that expedition.

We have nothing new either foreign or domestic. As soon as Acts shall have passed in pursuance of the late Recommendations of Congress I should be glad to have them transmitted to me. I am with great Respect, Yr Excellencys most obedient, humble Servant,

William Ellery

RC (R-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> During its March session the Rhode Island Assembly ordered John Collins, a provincial councilor, to go to York to obtain reimbursement from Congress for Rhode Island's expenditures for Continental purposes. As a result of Collins' mission, Congress agreed on May 2, 1778, that the Continental loan office in Rhode Island should pay \$150,000 to the governor and council of the state. See *JCC*, 10:367, 414, 11:415; and John R. Bartlett, ed., *Records of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations in New England*, vols. 8-10 (Providence: Cooke, Jackson & Co., 1863-65), 8:378.

## Eliphalet Dyer to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Sir,

York Town Jany the 5th. 1778.

I had the honor of yours of the 13th & 20th Ulmo. Since Brown left this place. By him you will receive mine of the      th of Decembr.<sup>1</sup> giving you such Intelligence as had lately Occurred to that time since which nothing material from the Army. They have moved on this side the Schuylkill about 20 miles distant from Philada. where they mean to hut for the winter in the best manner they can, and it is not very likely there will be much more fighting this season, only what will necessarily arise from parties of two hungry Armies Scrabbling for provisions, which may occasion some bloody noses in the Contest: and dare say between them both will most effectually glean the Inhabitants of this State both Whig & Tory for at least 50 miles from the Metropolis, fear Nothing more will be done this way, This Winter.

In Congress there are applications from every quarter, the burthens

of every department of the Army is revolved upon them, but the most Important & perplexing of all is the measures & conduct we ought to take with respect to Genll. Burgoyne and his Army;<sup>2</sup> on the one hand there is every thing to fear if he is suffered to embark that he will join the Enemy in America instead of going to Great Britain, on the other hand it concerns us inviolably to keep our faith, & maintain our honor, pledged for the punctual fulfillment on our part of all treaties, Contracts or Conventions made even with our Enemies; as we would not offend Heaven by our perfidy, nor forfeit our honor & reputation in the eyes of this, or the European World, who are & will be most attentively watchfull, over every part of our publick Conduct, and will fix their opinion & form their Estimation of these American States on no part more than that which concerns our publick faith, & honor. In the beginning of this infant Empire the greater care is to be taken to establish a fair & reputable Carracter, which if once lost is hardly to be regained. We have entertained a Jealousy of Genll Burgoynes Intentions to violate the Convention of Saratoga ever since his entire Surrendry, we think he very early made some Infractions in it, in the abuse of the Arms, carrying of many of the Cartouch boxes &c tho of so Small Consideration that we had no thought of taking any advantage of it; but by a late letter of his to Genll Gates, wherein he declares, that we on our part have broke our publick faith, in not providing for him & some of his Officers, such convenient accommodations as they ought to have had, has given us a particular Alarm, and as we Conceive are Strong Indications on his part of his Intentions, and gives us just reason to fear that he will take the Advantage to break over that Convention if he is suffered to Embark, & has it in his power.

This by all the great writers on the law of Nature & nations will Vindicate us in a Suspension on our part till he can and does remove those just grounds of Suspensions & fear. Thus far the way has been clear to me & my mind has been free from labouring doubt or perplexing Suspense; but the line of our Conduct Consistent with prudence & sound policy has given me greater solicitude & more anxious fears, and concern, than any other matter which has come under Consideration of Congress since I had the honor of a seat there, tho they might be as important or more so, yet the way has been much clearer which side to act, or what part to take in the conclusion; in this, to suffer Genll Burgoyne to Embark with his Troops, at once puts it in his power to joine the Enemy and to be more dangerous to us than if we never had accepted of his Surrendry, & which we are Inclined to think he will do not only by the declaration he has made that we on our part had broken our faith, but by his denial of giving us the name & description of the soldiery with him, by which they might be known if again found in Arms against us, and by Genll Hows sending the Transports to Rhodisland & the Sollicitation



made for Liberty of Burgoyne's embarking there. On the other hand, in making up our Judgment, we are deeply Interested, how to Judge in our own Cause, our Jealousies & Suspicions may goe too far, & warp our Judgements; and Indifferent Powers, not seeing through the same medium, may view the Conduct of Burgoyne in a different point of light, especially after his specious pretences and plausible explanations, and of the Court to which he belongs, and may Judge that we are a people of no Faith, & in whom no Confidence is to be placed, in the most solemn treaties or Conventions, & who will not be holden by the ties & obligations which bind the Civilized Nations at peace or in War. It may also disaffect the remaining friends or rather those of the opposition to the present Ministry & measures against the American States, whereby Irritated to the last degree by this supposed Violation & Infraction of a Solemn Convention, may kindle anew the Expiring flame, call forth fresh Vigor & Exertions among themselves & to arouse some friendly powers in Europe, to furnish them with greater Aid and Supplies to Crush if possible this new, & as they will say perfidious rising Empire, in whom there is no trust, nor faith, and may rouse and Animate the present hostile bands in America to more desperate Exertions, as they will not ever think again in any Circumstances to enter into any Capitulation or Convention with any of our Generals. To avoid such conclusions & Consequences and to guard as far as possible against every unfavourable Construction of our Conduct, in this important transaction, there were a Number in Congress of the opinion, first to Order a detainer of G<sup>l</sup> Burgoin and his Troops, Until he should explicitly revoke the declaration he had made in his letter to Gen<sup>l</sup> Gates, & solemnly renew & Confirm the Convention of Saratoga on his part, & Declare that on his Embarkation he would Immediately & directly proceed with them to Great Britain according to the true Interest and meaning of the Convention, which if he should readily do, then to permit him to Embark & Trust Providence with the Event, but if he refused (which we rather supposed he would) then to detain him with his Troops at all adventures, and should have no doubt of being fully justified therein by the Impartial world, and Every danger of any ill Consequences arising therefrom would be avoided. This was the Question we Insisted on being first put, but on a previous resolution being carried that no further Confidence or security were to be had or relied on from Gen<sup>l</sup> Burgoyne, rendered it absurd to put him on any further declaration or Confirmation of the former Convention, which brot. it to the Conclusive resolve which was passd. viz. that Gen<sup>l</sup> Burgoyne and his Troops should be detained until the Court of Great Britain should ratify & Confirm the Convention & proper notice thereof be Given.<sup>3</sup> In this the Yeas & Nays were called for & there were some members with myself who did not Choose to act or give our voice in the matter, as we chose first to have taken the other Method

proposed, (ie) to call upon him for a full & explicit declaration and renewed Confirmation of the Convention on his part (as he had publicly declared we had broke our faith therein) & if so he must suppose himself to have been exonerated therefrom, and if he had refused, then we were clear for the last resolution proposd, & as we were denied that question first, declined acting in the latter, as our opinion & conduct on the whole could not appear in its true light to the publick. How far my Conduct in this important affair may be approved or not by my Constituents I cannot say but an approving Conscienceness of the rectitude of my Intentions, Yields satisfaction in my own heart.

No one wished more to have Burgoyne detained, but before the last step was taken, on which the future Carracter of these United States so much depends, & on which Consequences the most Interesting to them may follow, I could have wished such previous steps to have been taken (& which I firmly believed would have terminated in the same manner) and would have put it beyond a doubt, that we had acted not only a cautious & prudent part but Consistent with good faith & honor & that which could not leave so much as a stain behind, among friends, or foes that we had violated either. In this as well as many other Important matters I longed for the aid and consultation of some of my Judicious Colleagues, it would much have lightened my burthen, strengthened my faith, or rectified my Judgment, but hope it will terminate well & no ill Consequences follow, that Heaven will approve, and man not Condemn, in which shall be most happy, tho I could not see my way Clear in the manner. An Express is gone forward with the Resolution of Congress to Genll Heath to detain Genll Burgoyne with his Troops till the Convention is ratified by the Court of Great Britain, which by the way, I feared would only appear a meer protest as all agree that the Convention never required a ratification either by Congress or Great Britain as to its Validity. But as this matter is Enjoined a Secret till published at Boston, I hope this letter may be kept private till you hear of it from there, and then am willing it should be as publick as you think proper.

We have just received from Genll Washington the agreeable intelligence that a large brigantine of the Enemy laden with Officers baggage & Cloathing for 3 or 4 regiments, above 7000 of small arms, a Col., Lieut & about 70 privates on board, a number Mariners, about 40 officers wives or ladies besides other baggage, run aground a little below Wilmington of which Genll Smallwood was apprised of, attacked her from the shore with 2 field pieces, obliged her soon to surrender and was unlading of her with all speed with about 300 men, was in hopes of getting away all her Cargoe, the people all made prisoners, Many other valuable articles on board not Enumerated above.<sup>4</sup> Also he had heard but not with so full a Confirmation

that another of the Enemies Vessels had run ashore on the Jersey side & was taken by the Jersey People Contents unknown, a most seasonable relief to our Army who were much in want of those necessary Articles; which a kind Providence has thrown into our hands. Mr Davenport, Mr Colts Clerk has been waiting here some days for directions in his department. As Congress had Committed the affairs of that Department into your hands they neither had time nor Inclination to attend to them. Mr Buchanon will write him what he thinks proper on the subject & he must apply to you for any further direction he wants.<sup>5</sup>

Am with the greatest respect your honor's most Obedt Humble  
Servt  
Elipht Dyer

[P.S.] I had forgot to mention, that previous to the above, some time agoe Congress passed a Resolve that Genll Burgoyne was not to Embark till he paid off in Silver or Gold all the Expenses for his support & his Troops since the Convention.<sup>6</sup>

The want of Provisions especially the meat kind for our Army, will we fear, not only prevent calling in such reinforcements as are necessary to drive How out of Philad (which was fully proposed & there on [are] men Enough ready to step forth on such an occasion from the Jerseys & Elsewhere) but fear will oblige the army we have to scatter or disband, we are really alarmed that that will be the Case. Every exertion is necessary from Every quarter to prevent it.<sup>7</sup>

Tr (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> No December 1777 letter from Dyer to Governor Trumbull has been found.

<sup>2</sup> For the background of Congress' suspension of the Saratoga Convention, see Henry Laurens to William Heath, December 27, 1777, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> See *JCC*, 10:13-14, 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> In his December 30, 1777, letter to Washington, Gen. William Smallwood had described the capture of the British armed brig *Symetry*, whose cargo included clothing for four regiments and over 1,000 stand of arms. Washington had enclosed Smallwood's letter with his January 1 letter that was read in Congress on the fifth. Washington Papers, DLC; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:243-46; and *JCC*, 10:18.

<sup>5</sup> See Henry Laurens to Peter Colt, January 14, 1778.

<sup>6</sup> See the resolve of December 19, 1777. *JCC*, 9:1036-37.

<sup>7</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Dyer to Trumbull, January 14, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to John Adams

Dear sir,

York Town 5th January 1778.

I had the honour of Addressing you on the 28th November & 3d Ult. in Official Letters from Congress. My present business is to entreat your protection to the enclosed Packet from Baron Kalb which he intimates to me is intended to be of particular service to



these States.<sup>1</sup> You will be pleased either to take it under your immediate care if you intend within a few Weeks to embark for France or, if you do not, to commit it to the charge of some person in whom you can confide, with direction in case of Capture to use his utmost endeavour to conceal & save it & attempt a conveyance from England if he should be carried into that Kingdom. The Baron will be much obliged to you for information how you intend to dispose of this Letter.<sup>2</sup>

We have advice from General Smallwood stationed at Wilmington, of a Capture made by him of Brigantine which had got aground about 5 Miles above that place—a British Captain & 67 Soldiers—the Master & Mate & 12 or 15 Seamen & 40 Women some of them Officers Wives made Prisoners—The Brigantine was armed 6, 4 pounders & some Swivels. The British Captain was sulky & refused to disclose the particular Contents of the Cargo. The Master of the Vessel said she was laden with Bales & Boxes the Contents not known to him but he understood there were Clothing for four Regiments with Camp Equipage, 1000 or 1500 stand of Arms, some ammunition, 5 Hogsheads Rum, Butter & other Provisions, some Sugar, Tea &c. proper the Clothing & Arms were intended for new Levies expected to be raised. General Smalwood intimates that he had 300 Men at work unloading the Vessel & hoped soon to give a more special Account. A Sloop laden with flour & Pork is also taken, the Cargo would be secured & the Vessel burned.

'Tis reported also that the Jersey Militia had taken a Scots Vessel aground supposed to be fully Loaden with Merchandize & the Master's name, Speers, is mentioned—but this wants confirmation.

I beg you will do me the favor to present my Compliments to Mr. S. Adams & believe me to be with great Respect & Esteem, Sir, Your Obedient & most humble servant, Henry Laurens

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to Baron de Kalb, January 1, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> The LB of this letter in the Laurens Papers, SCHi, ends here and is dated January 3.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir, York Town 5 Jany 1778

I flatter myself with hopes that the very important Letter which I had the honour of writing to you the 27th Ulto. by Messenger Mackloskey together with one enclosed in it calculated for Barring the departure of General Burgoyne will be put into your hand this day.

It may appear to Gentlemen who are not informed of the Circum-

stances of Congress, the intervening time has been sufficient for maturing their intended Declaration & Resolves upon that subject, but you Sir, will not wonder at the delay, when I tell you that from unaccountable deficiencies in the several departments, Congress have found it absolutely necessary for saving the Army from general dispersion to interfere personally in the businesses of Quarter Master general, Clothier General, Commissary general, Director general of the Hospitals &c &c. These extraordinary & unreasonable burthens have fallen extremely heavy upon a few Members who faithfully devote their time to Public service. However the other great work although not completed has not been neglected. Congress have proceeded so far as the inclosed Copy of two Resolves intimate—these I transmit in confirmation of what I had the honour of writing as above mentioned & under the same injunctions of prudent & necessary secrecy.<sup>1</sup> Tis highly probable that in the Course of the present Week I shall be authorized to transmit the Act complete & Certified.

I remain with very great Regard, Sir, Your Most humble Servant,  
Henry Laurens, President of Congress

P.S. To guard against accidents I have ordered duplicates of my Letter of the 27th Ult. & the other to be made out & will Inclose them under the present Cover.

RC (MHi). Addressed: "The Honorable Major General Heath, Commander in Chief of the Troops of the United States of America in the Eastern department &c &c, Boston."

<sup>1</sup> These resolves, which were passed on January 2 and 3, charged that General Burgoyne was planning to repudiate the Saratoga Convention and declared that in consequence he and his men could not return to England until the British government had ratified this agreement. *JCC*, 10:13, 16-17.

## Henry Laurens to Philip Schuyler

Sir,

5th Jany 1778

The preceeding which I had the honour of writing to you the 20th past would have on this day been much nearer to you, if I had not confided in a French Officer who was desirous of the charge & who assured me he intended to travel much quicker than our common Messengers. Upon sending to enquire for him I learn he is Sick & his journey to Albany deferred. This affords me however an opportunity to inform you Sir, that Congress have appointed three additional Members on the Committee within mentioned.<sup>1</sup> I shall urge these Gentlemen to proceed without delay & I hope in a few days to be authorized, to inform you the result of their deliberations.

I have the honour to be &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup>On December 26 Congress had added Francis Dana, William Ellery, and John Witherspoon to the committee investigating "the causes of the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, and . . . the conduct of the general officers in that department at the time of the evacuation." *JCC*, 9:1053. For a full account of the work of this committee, of which Laurens himself was a member, see John Hancock to Arthur St. Clair and Philip Schuyler, August 5, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Sir,

5th Jany 1778.

I catch a few minutes between adjournment & meeting of Congress to say a word in reply to your Excellency's favour of the 2d Ulto.<sup>1</sup> which I was unable to do by the late Messenger.

I have been a good deal affected by the perusal of Colo. Jno. Trumbull's correspondence—the cause of his disappointment & mortification is no Secret to me. I discovered it very early after I had the misfortune of arriving at the State House Philadelphia. Although I do not mean to add to the affront which appears to me to have been calculated for that Gentleman, yet I cannot forbear wishing that had been the greatest Evil produced from the Source I allude to. My sentiments cannot be otherwise than in favour of Colonel Trumbull's determination, because, I declare it upon my honour, I would have acted the same part had I been reduced to similar circumstances. Men have a right to punctilio, when an honorable tenacity does not essentially injure their Country.

I was almost a Stranger in Congress when the appointment of a Commissary general was on the tapis, & candidly confess I was much misled by specious Representations, not that I was without some jealousies. For before the debate upon that Subject was finally ended, I saw party, & lamented the prospect, every day enlightened me & I soon prognostic[c]ated Evils which we are now labouring under & which must be conquered by Virtuous exertions or we shall soon be exposed to the ridicule annexed to those who attempt to build without counting the Cost. Ridicule will not be the whole penalty which will be laid on thousands of us. We are now good Sir, now at this Instance on the brink of a precipice. If we have Wisdom, if we have Virtue, we will hasten to withdraw. I pray God to aid us in this moment of danger. Not only the Commissariat but other departments on which the Salvation of the Army equally depends are somewhat more than deranged, they are shattered & distracted. Congress for some time past have been obliged personally to act Commissary general, Qur. Master general, Clothier general, Director general of Hospitals &c &c. Since you have invited me Sir to conversation from the respect I bear to your Character I wish I could communicate my Sentiments more copiously than the present time will permit. There-



fore I must return. I have great reason to believe that Gentlemen in general now wish that the demands which were made by Colo. Joseph Trumbull as the condition of his holding his late Commission had been complied with, because we must now be convinced he had only public benefit in view. I have also reason to believe it will be necessary for us to resort to him again. Should this happen, that Gentleman's patriotism will appear in Lustre, if he passing over those exceptions which the pride of human nature will first dictate, will Step in & contribute his Talents & abilities for saving his Country. In the mean time I am persuaded he will as far as it may be in his power assist & promote the business of supplying the Army & put out of countenance every malignant insinuation of throwing Stumbling Blocks in the way.

General Washington informs Congress of a capture made by General Smallwood to whose letter he refers Vizt. Wilmington 30 December 1777.<sup>2</sup>

"I received intelligence of an Armed Brigt aground 5 miles above this place. I detached a Strong party & two field peices—she refused to surrender & prepared to engage supposing we had only Musketry but on firing two shot she surrendered. The prisoners are a British Captain & 67 Soldiers—the Master, Mate & 12 or 15 Seamen & about 40 Women some of them Officers Wives—the Vessel carries 6 4 pounders & some swivils—the British Captain is too sulky to give any information of her load & the Master says he never was suffered to know but believes there is the Officers Baggage of 4 Regiments & Camp Equipage & some Soldiers Clothing & Arms, 4 or 5 Puncheons of Rum, some Sugars & Teas. The Master says he has heard from the Soldiers & Women that there is Clothing for 4 Regiments & 1000 or 1500 Stands of Arms, but he is in doubt, as the Captain always evaded his Enquiry, but says she is filled with Bales & Baggage & some ammunition. I have 300 Men at work unloading her which is attended with much difficulty on Account of Mud & Ice, I will render you a more particular account shortly."

A Young Gentleman with whom I correspond in the Army adds, a Sloop "laden with Flour & Pork for the Philadelphia Market is likewise taken & will be burnt or secured."<sup>3</sup>

& a Report is just now brought in of a third prize a Scots Vessel fully laden & even the Captains name mentioned Speers taken in the Jersey shoar. I wish this may prove true. I am with very great Regard &ca.

LB (ScHi). There is another LB of this letter in the Laurens Papers, ScHi, written in a clerical hand and dated January 3, but the date is clearly in error because Congress did not learn about Gen. William Smallwood's capture of the British armed brig *Symetry* until the 5th.

<sup>1</sup> A transcript of Governor Trumbull's December 2 letter to Laurens is in the Laurens Papers, ScHi. With it the governor enclosed five letters relating to the

April 1777 resignation of his son John as deputy adjutant general in the northern department—a February 22, 1777, letter from John Trumbull to John Hancock; March 3 and 31, 1777, letters from John Trumbull to James Lovell; and March 16 and 22, 1777, letters from Lovell to John Trumbull. Lovell's letters are printed in volume six of this series, and John's resignation is discussed in an editorial note to that of March 16.

<sup>2</sup> This day Congress read Washington's January 1 letter to Laurens and the enclosed December 30 letter from General Smallwood to Washington. See *JCC*, 10:18; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:243–46; and Washington Papers, DLC.

<sup>3</sup> John Laurens had reported the capture of this sloop in a January 1 letter to his father. Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, p. 100.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

5 Jan'y 1778.

Last Night I was honoured with your Excellency's Letter of the 1st Inst. I presented it this Morning to Congress but have received no other Commands except to acquaint Your Excellency that Colonel Scammel by an Unanimous ballot is elected Adjutant General in the Army which will further appear by the inclosed Certified Act of the present date.<sup>1</sup>

I shall likewise inclose a Resolve of Congress of the 3d authorizing your Excellency to appoint such number of Aids de Camp as you may judge necessary &ca.

Eight or nine days being elapsed since by possitive Order from Congress I directed Major General Heath, to detain Lt. General Burgoyne & his Troops, enjoining him at the same time to Secrecy until it shall become absolutely necessary to disclose the Order, I intimated to Congress this Morning the propriety of acquainting your Excellency for obvious reasons with a measure of such importance & received directions to forward the two Resolves which will accompany the papers above mentioned.<sup>2</sup> Congress mean to introduce these Resolutions by a Suitable declaratory preface. The work has indeed been a long time on the Anvil. I hope the whole will soon be perfected for the view of the World. The burthen of business in Congress lies extremely heavy upon a few Members who now faithfully attend & these meet with greater difficulties from being driven out of their regular Sphere & necessitated in many Instances to Act in person Commissary general, Quarter Master general, Clothier general, Director general of Hospitals &c &c in order to save the Army from dispersion. I am &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens informed Col. Alexander Scammell of his appointment in a brief letter he wrote to him this day. PCC, item 13, fol. 111. Scammell took the place of Timothy Pickering, who had become a member of the reorganized Board of War.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 10:13, 16–17.

## Francis Lewis to the New York Convention

Sir,<sup>1</sup>

Yorktown, 5th Jany. 1778.

I had the honour to write you lately by the messenger who was sent from hence with money for the expenditures of our State. In that letter <sup>2</sup> I advised you that with the advice and concurrence of my colleague, Mr. Duer, I had purchased woollens for the use of your troops, amounting to £2,223 5s. which remains in Mr. Duer's quarters, waiting for your orders.

By a letter from His Excellency Governor Clinton read this day in Congress, I learn that he had convened the Assembly to meet on the same day. I hope they will advert to the appointment of one or more Delegates to represent them in Congress. Mr. G. Morris does not appear, and Mr. Duer is gone for a few days into the country, his ill state of health requiring a recess from business; so that our State is without representation in Congress, which at this critical time is to be much regretted. as there is not a sufficient number of members to expedite the business now before the House, and that business hourly accumulating.

The Legislature of the State of Virginia has ratified the Articles of Confederation: Congress hopes the other States will speedily follow the example. With profound respect, I am, sir, Your most obedt. hum. servt.

Fra. Lewis.

Reprinted from *Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 2:1116-17.

<sup>1</sup> Lewis addressed this letter to Pierre Van Cortlandt, the president of the New York Convention.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

## Francis Lewis to the New York Convention

Sir,<sup>1</sup>

Yorktown, 5th Jany. 1778.

The express going off gives me but just time to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 17th ulto. with the enclosed papers, which I shall immediately lay before Congress, and urge the expediency of those measures therein proposed being carried into execution, and shall advise you with the result.<sup>2</sup>

Congress has been of late sensible of many abuses crept into the commissary's and quarter-master's departments, and which will be soon taken under consideration of Congress.<sup>3</sup> I wrote the Honble. President Van Cortlandt this day, to which beg to refer you. And am, sir, Your obedient humble servant

Fra. Lewis.

Reprinted from *Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 1:1117.

<sup>1</sup> Lewis addressed this letter to Evert Bancker, the president pro tempore of the New York Convention.



<sup>2</sup> The New York Council of Safety's December 17 letter to the New York delegates, which urged Congress to authorize the states to regulate the commissary's and quartermaster's departments, is in PCC, item 67, 1:354, and *Journals of N.Y. Prov. Cong.*, 1:1102. The committee appointed on January 6 to consider this letter was discharged from its task on January 17. See *JCC*, 10:24, 59.

<sup>3</sup> Congress appointed a committee to consider the commissariat on January 14. *JCC*, 10:51.

## Robert Morris to Henry Laurens

Sir

Manheim Jany 5th. 1778

Your favour of the 1st Inst. I have received and am sorry I had been misinformed with respect to the Copies of Mr Deanes letters having been read in Congress.<sup>1</sup> The Gentn. who wrote me they were, understood so, but when I was in York on Saturday, I learnt that it was only the letter to Mr Hancock that was read, and agreeable to your request, I now send all the Copies that Mr. Deane inclosed to Mr Hancock & his letter to me of the 1st October, the Contents are mortifying to me but as I am conscious that I do not deserve the Reflections & insinuations made against me, so I hope the Congress will be Convinced thereof by the letter I had the honor to write you on the occasion.

I hope no time will be lost in transmitting Mr. Thos. Morris's dismission, that the Commissioners may be no longer plagued nor the Public injured by his Indiscretions. After reading Mr Deanes letters to me in Congress I dare say you will think it highly proper that my letter shou'd be read again least there may be Members that hear one & not the other. I have the honor to remain Your Excellencys Most Obedt Servant,

Robt Morris

P.S. Mr Duer will deliver Mr Deanes letters and after they are read I hope he will be permitted to send them back to me.

RC (DNA: PCC, item 137).

<sup>1</sup> See also Charles Thomson to Robert Morris, January 1, 1778.

## Jonathan Bayard Smith to Timothy Matlack

Dr. Sir

York Town Jany. 5th. 1778

The letter from his excellency the President & the Speaker of the Assembly was this morning read in Congress.<sup>1</sup> As far as could be discovered the expediency & indeed necessity of something vigorous & immediate were in the sentiments of the whole house. They referred the letter to a Committee viz: myself, Dr Witherspoon & Mr.

Fulsom. The articles of arms & provisions will probably be a weight. Can meat be procured? We are informed this day that eno' for 6 weeks for the army cannot be had of flour &c. I can have no doubt. Indeed I this day assured congress that all the difficulties arose from the mismanagement of the Commissaries only. It is probable a copy of the letter will be sent forward immediately to the General. Possibly the army may not now be in a situation to support the measure, as upon a late formal discussion on the subject, when a Committee from congress was at camp on the purpose, it was deemed impracticable; & many officers are away, & perhaps as great a proportion of the men. I think you may rely on Congress having it much at heart. [I will] be glad to know particularly from time to time what [response the?] inclinations of the people make. I shall feel myself [happy in?] having an opportunity of gaining to this state a reputation [with Congress?] on this head; & shall not fail of availing myself of informations you may give.

The Papers respecting waggons &c are now with a Committee. Congress appear averse to raising the pay.

We have a letter from Genl. Smallwood informing of his having taken a Brig of 6 Guns bound from N York to Philada. one Capt. & 70 Privates on board, a master & 12 mariners, & 40 women, officers wives &c. The Sulkiness of the Capt & the ignorance of the Master who says the loading was concealed from him prevented the Genl. from giving an account of what was on board. 1500 stand of arms, some ammuniton, cloathing for 4000 men, or for 4 regiments which uncertain, some cash, rum, wine &c. he heard of.

My best Compliments to the President & Gentlemen of the Council particularly to Mr. Bryan. With Compliments of the Season I am Dr. Sir with much respect Yr fd. & v. h. st. J B Smith

[P.S.] Mr Saml Lyon will take your bags tomorrow morning. When I shall have the pleasure of seeing you I will tell you how much yo[u] obliged,  
J B S

Compts to our good frd. Mr. Marshal.

RC (PHarH). Addressed: "Timothy Matlack Esqr. Secy to Honble. Council of Pennsylvania at Lancaster."

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 10:18. President Thomas Wharton's and Speaker James McLene's January 2 letter to President Laurens, which enclosed a petition urging an attack on Philadelphia while the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers were frozen, is in PCC, item 69, fols. 449-50, item 33, fols. 83-86, and *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:153-54. The committee to which the letter was referred, consisting of Smith, Nathaniel Folsom, and John Witherspoon, delivered a report to Congress on January 9 but it was not brought to a vote until the 16th. At that time Congress applauded "the rising spirit of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania to regain the capital of their State" and directed the committee appointed to go to camp to confer with Washington and the Pennsylvania Council on the proposal's feasibility. See JCC, 10:36-37, 58. That Congress urged Washington to take the

offensive against the British army at a time when the commander in chief was desperately concerned merely with feeding his army and keeping it intact underscores the delegates' inability to set priorities and come to grips with the most pressing problems confronting them at this time. Reluctant to deny the Pennsylvanians' request, frustrated at the defensive posture forced upon them by General Howe, and ignorant of the actual condition of the army at Valley Forge, Congress chose to pass on responsibility for disposition of the proposal rather than to deal with it forthrightly. See also Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton, January 16, note 1; and Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, February 3, 1778.

## Cornelius Harnett to William Wilkinson

Dear Sir

York Town Pensylvania Jany. 6. 1778

I am to acknowlege the receipt of your favours of the 25 Novr. and 3 Decr. by Post. I wish I could make a little good News for you, for unless I do, you will not I fear hear any thing very Interesting for a Month or two to come. However Our Army have taken up their Winter Quarters at The Valey Forge about 16 miles from the City, where they have built Hutts. The General intends living in one himself. I send you all the Papers I can come at. I may perhaps by next Post send you Intelligence from the North, which will Surprise all America. I beg you will Continue to send me all the News papers you can possibly Collect, I believe you are afraid of making your packet too large. Mr. Maclain writes me he had hopes of getting Our River Fortified; but I have *dispered* of it long since, if the Assembly should agree to it, I shall believe that Miricles have not yet Ceased. I promised to send you a Copy of the Confederation but Mr. Penn, some how or Other (I believe by mistake) sent them all to Our Assembly.

I have been very desirous to hear what is become of Capt. Allon. I beg you will inform me. If he should be at C. Fear tell him he has used me ill in not writing to me & I shall at a proper time Call him to account. I hope his family are well.

You always say you have no news, surely you can send me domestic Intelligence which will be very agreeable, I have heard a Distiller & have sent for him, I wish you would inform me what the Company would be willing to give by the Year, Let me know the most you can afford, & I will agree for as much less as possible. Are your Vessels arrived or are they taken? Make my Comps, to Mr Quince, Mr. Ancrum & all my friends and Acquaintances, tell those two Gentlemen I shall Answer their agreeable favours by next Post. As for friend Clayton, he is Indebted to me two Letters. A Merry Christmas, & happy Year to you all. I am, Dr Sir, Your sincere friend  
& Ob servt,

Cornl. Harnett



## Henry Laurens to Ephraim Blaine

Sir,

6th Jany 1778.

Immediately upon receiving your favour of the 4th Inst. this Morning, I presented it to Congress & have in charge to signify to you, that the House being well satisfied with your past conduct & reposing the highest confidence in your Zeal & abilities to serve the public they are not disposed to receive your Resignation without calling upon you to reconsider the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Congress therefore, after adding the assurance of their purpose to afford every proper Support for enabling you to proceed in procuring ample Supplies of provision for the Army & particularly an Assistant, have some ground to expect a chearful acquiescence on your part & that under these considerations your attachment to the great Cause in which we are engaged will animate you to persevere in the Duties of your Office improving times & circumstances, unfavorable as these are, to the best advantage.

Congress will expect your determination, which, speaking their sentiments, I hope will be a compliance with their desire, in this case it may be proper that you should name a person whom you could wish to be appointed as an Aid. I hope no doubt but that the person you recommend will be the choice of Congress.<sup>2</sup> I am &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Ephraim Blaine Esquire, Dep. Commy. general of purchases, Middle department, Lancaster."

<sup>1</sup> Ephraim Blaine's January 4 letter to Laurens, in which he described the problems of his commissariat and offered to resign as deputy commissary of purchases for the middle department, is in PCC, item 78, 2:323-24. Blaine's letter was referred to a committee this day along with a January 6 letter from Commissary General of Purchases William Buchanan setting forth some difficulties that had arisen in regard to provisioning British prisoners and American soldiers. Congress passed resolves designed to address the complaints of both men on January 14. See *JCC*, 10:22, 37, 48, 50; and PCC, item 78, 2:333-34. Blaine continued to serve as deputy commissary of purchases until 1779. See Lewis Morris to Blaine, May 14, 1776, note.

<sup>2</sup> This day Laurens also wrote a brief letter to "Barlet Williams, Esquire, Williamsburg," promising to forward certain "Acts of Congress" that Williams had requested in a December 18 letter which is not mentioned in the journals or located in PCC. PCC, item 13, fol. 113.

## Henry Laurens to the Chevalier de Kermorvan

Sir,

6th Jany 1778.

At my return from Congress I found your Letter on my Table. It gives me concern to read such Complaints as you exhibit, but it is not my province to determine upon them, all that I can do is to offer your Letter again to Congress which you may be assured Sir I will do to morrow Morning. I am Sir

7th. Sr. I presented your Letter to Congress but no order was made up on it which added to their determination signified to you the 3d Inst. convince me future applications will be equally troublesome & fruitless to yourself.<sup>1</sup> I am &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Despite Laurens' warning Kermorvan continued to press for promotion to brigadier general and as a result Congress dismissed him from service on February 9, 1778. See *JCC*, 10:91, 101, 138-39.

## Henry Laurens to William Shippen, Jr.

Sir,

7th Jany 1778

I beg leave to refer you to the Inclosed Act of Congress of yesterdays date containing divers articles relative to your department, particularly an injunction on you to attend the House on the 26th Inst.<sup>1</sup> I remain with great regard.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Doctor William Shippen Esquire, director General of Hospitals in the \_\_\_\_\_, per his Messenger."

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also wrote virtually the same letter this day to Dr. Benjamin Rush, the physician general in the middle department. PCC, item 13, fol. 115. For an explanation of Congress' decision to have Rush and Shippen testify before it about conditions in the medical department, see James Lovell to Samuel Adams, January 1, 1778, note 1.

## Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board

Gentlemen

January 7th 1778

Your Letter of the 26th ultimo has come to hand and shall be duely attended to. As the Eastern Navy Board are in great want of flour & Iron to carry on the public business within their district we request that you will immediately purchase on the best terms in your power 2,000 Barrels flour and 100 Tons Iron and have the same transported down to little Egg Harbour and there stored to wait the arrival of some Vessels which the Navy Board at Boston will send round. The Masters of said vessels will be directed to apply to you, and you will give Orders for the delivery of the same.

We shall expect an immediate answer from you relative to the above purchase and remain, Gentlemen, Your obedt servants

P.S. Please to let us know if Vessels can be Chartered at Egg Harbor to carry the Flour & Iron to Boston.

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

## Henry Laurens' Notes

[January 8, 1778]<sup>1</sup>

Notes on General Burgoyne's Letter to General Gates

14th November 1777

General Gates transmitted a Copy of that Letter to the President of Congress, Henry Laurens, without one syllable of remark upon or reference to it. "The Public faith is broke" must have been understood in full force by General Gates, who knew the subjects of Complaint on which that intimation was founded, were trivial & feigned.

The accomodations were the best that could on a sudden be procured upon the first arrival of the Convention Troops at Cambridge, nothing contrary to agreement & better than General Burgoyne & his Officers must frequently have submitted to between Canada & Cambridge, but our General perhaps a little captivated by the flattery of a British Lieutenant General, while he felt it his duty to transmit the Letter was too polite to animadvert as if he had said, "I'll leave this matter to Congress."

It is certain he was too polite to make the Lieutenant General & his Troops Prisoners at discretion which might as easily have been effected as making a Convention.

From the moment I perused General Burgoyne's Letter to the conclusion of the business I always made the following comment upon "the public faith is broke."

The British Commanders having frequently declared there is no faith to be kept with Rebels & having as often acted in conformity, Sir Wm Howe, Sir H Clinton have directed Burgoyne whenever his Troops shall be embark'd to order the Transport Ships to go into New York or Delaware as the Winds may permit.<sup>2</sup> General Burgoyne a little staggered by such an Order & feeling for his own reputation, devised means for vindicating the intended breach on his part whenever his conduct should be called in question & the Letter to General Gates was calculated for the purpose, encircled by flattery of Gates in particular & of the Military at Boston in general, a kind of loose hint is thrown in "the public faith is broke."

By whom & how? By the Government of Massachusetts or the Magistracy of Boston, because they have not in an Instant furnished the Convention Officers with more commodious Lodgings than they were allowed when Sir Wm. Howe was in possession of Boston, or more commodious than probably some of them enjoyed at the very time for themselves & families, at the same time more commodious were in preparation & were very soon provided for the Officers & Troops.

"This Letter, reasoned General Burgoyne, will take up some days to reach General Gates, possibly he may overlook my hint, but should he forward it to Congress, that will be a work of more days, more will be required for their deliberations, & more again for sending



their Resolutions to General Heath at Boston in the whole at this season of the Year at least five Weeks, in the mean time the Transports will arrive & we shall be gone." (This would certainly have happened had not the Transports suffered delay by very tempestuous weather.) "Should I go into New York or Delaware & be afterwards charg'd with breach of the Convention, I shall refer to my Letter written to the very General with whom I contracted, in which I complain, the Public faith was first broken by the United States. I shall obey my Orders & at the same time exempt my self from any imputation of dishonor."

That it was not intended to send the Troops across the Atlantic appears clearly from the inadequate quantity of Tonnage of the Transports which were sent to receive them as well as from the scantiness of provisions & Water laid in, for a Voyage to Europe, & from General Burgoyne's refusal to give proper descriptions of his Officers, Non Commission'd Officers &c—see Report of a Committee, or of General Heath or both. Besides General Burgoyne had violated the Convention by the affair of the Cartouch Boxes, the Army Colours, The Military Chest, more particularly by rendering all the Muskets of his Army unfit for service.

That Sir Henry Clinton & Sir Wm. Howe were equal to an Act so dishonorable as ordering the Convention Troops into New York, holding every thing fair play with Rebels, there can be no doubt when we reflect upon their former conduct & upon their subsequent stratagems in conjunction with their Brother Commissioners, for swindling Congress out of those Troops, pretending they were authorized to Ratify the Convention which authority when demanded they could not produce. See Letters to & from Congress on that point.

No plausible reason ever appeared, none can be assigned, for the high Resentment of the British Court against General Burgoyne but his having written that Letter, the intended business would have been accomplish'd but for his mar-plot delicacy. The King would not see him, he remained under a heavy Cloud during all Lord North's Administration. He was afterwards promoted.<sup>3</sup> Why? Because he had been injured.

Had the Convention Troops reached New York or Philadelphia they would instantly have been employed against us, either in Garrison or in the Field, probably both. Congress might have clamored, but their complaints would have been treated as former complaints had been, with contempt. And the World at large would have laughed at them.

When General Burgoyne found the ill effect of his Letter, his temper sowered, he became crabbed & sought for occasions to pick quarrels with the American Military.

The correspondence between him & General Gates, no doubt there was a correspondence, after it had been determined to *suspend* the

embarkation of the Troops, would be a curiosity. I know Gates maintain'd the rectitude of the suspension.

MS (MHi: William Gilmore Simms Collection deposit). Endorsed by Laurens: "Conjectures on General Burgoyne's Letter of 14th November 1777 to General Gates. Respecting the Convention Troops."

<sup>1</sup> Although these undated notes were obviously written sometime after the fall of Lord North's government in March 1782 and the appointment of General Burgoyne as commander in chief of the British army in Ireland the following month, they are printed here because of the detailed description they provide of Laurens' motives for supporting the decision Congress made this day to suspend the Saratoga Convention.

<sup>2</sup> From the perspective of the twentieth century it seems clear that Laurens' suspicions of British perfidy were not unfounded. On November 16, 1777, for example, Gen. William Howe ordered Burgoyne to dispatch the "Foreign Troops" under his command back to England but to send his "British Artillery Men and Infantry" to New York so that they could be exchanged for American prisoners of war and thus continue to serve in America. Compliance with this order would, of course, have violated the Saratoga Convention, which required all of Burgoyne's men to return to England. See Jane Clark, "The Convention Troops and the Perfidy of Sir William Howe," *American Historical Review* 37 (July 1932): 721-23.

<sup>3</sup> Burgoyne was appointed commander in chief of the British army in Ireland by the Rockingham administration on April 16, 1782. See *The Annual Register* . . . for the Year 1782, 2d ed. (London: J. Dodsley, 1791), p. 235.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir, York Town Pennsylvania January [8] 1778.<sup>1</sup>

Congress having taken under their most serious consideration the refusal of Lt. General Burgoyne to return the names & such descriptive marks of the Non Commissioned Officers, Privates &c. included in the Convention of Saratoga as had been required by Congress, following in that Instance the example established by Sir Guy Carlton & himself, which to you, Lt. General Burgoyne was pleased first to misrepresent & then appeal to. And also a declaration made upon the most frivolous pretence by the said Lieutt. General to Major General Gates in a Letter of the 14th November a Copy of which will accompany this, that "The Public faith is broke" & that himself & his dependents were the "immediate sufferers" are justly alarmed by apprehensions that the last mentioned in particular is a measure projected for giving Colour to his receding from the articles of the Convention & that it also strongly indicates a determination in his mind to absolve himself from his engagements.

I have therefore in charge from the Representatives of the thirteen United States of America in Congress assembled to direct & enjoin you to detain the said Leiutt. General Burgoyne, his Officers, Troops

& other persons & to suspend their intended embarkation until you shall be further Instructed. I have the honour to be, With great Esteem & Respect, Sir Your most obedient & Most humble servant,  
Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens wrote this letter on December 27, 1777, but dated it "January 1778" in anticipation of Congress' action in suspending the Saratoga Convention. It is printed here because on this date Congress officially suspended the convention. For further information on the provenance of this letter as well as the controversy over the convention, see Laurens to Heath, December 27, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear Son,

8th Jany 1778

The day before yesterday I sent you a few hasty lines<sup>1</sup> by Messenger Gray—last Night pretty late in Congress your very affecting Letter of the 3d was brought to me<sup>2</sup>—it accompanied a packet from Your General dispatched the 2d.<sup>3</sup> The Contents of this, as duty required, I reported immediately, but your writing, as discretion bids, I have concealed in my own breast. You speak in the warmth & affection of a Man under strong attachments, therefore I do not wonder at certain expressions which you would not have dropped to any but a friend in whose attachment you confide. If my memory does not deceive me, I hinted some time ago my discovery of party in our Councils. The events which I dreaded & in many instances predicted, are now coming to maturity. Some of our friends in Charles Town to whom I had communicated my sentiments freely when they learn our present circumstances will look back to my Letters of August & September. I lament the particular unhappiness which you write of, but I do not confine my view to so narrow a Circle, our whole frame is shattered. We are tottering, & without the immediate exertions of wisdom & fortitude we must fall flat down. Among the Causes of this melancholy state are to be found some Men in whom your friend<sup>4</sup> reposed an implicit confidence. I do not mean in the Army—did not I intimate to you some distress I was under in answering a Letter soon after I was called to the Presidency, because I could not flatter?<sup>5</sup> The Man I alluded to, against whom I can have no prejudice, for we always in our short acquaintance sat & drank together in great cordiality has contributed largely to the promotion of *party*. His fawning mild address & obsequiousness procured him toleration from great Men on both sides, a sort of favoritism from some. His Idleness, duplicity & criminal partialities in a certain Circle laid the foundation of our present deplorable state. If your friend knew these



things as well as I do, he would see as clearly as I do, how his honest heart has been deceived—but enough of this till we meet.

I am not quite sure of the fact, but I believe you have hit the pivot<sup>6</sup> upon which the late mischiefs have turned. In order however to justify this Idea, we must include Characters of whom your friend entertains the most favorable sentiments, these taken together form a Club whose demands upon the Treasury & the War Office never go away ungratified. Candour obliges me to say that some of them respect your friend & I am persuaded would not wittingly be concerned in a plot against him, but they “want the honour to defend.” In all such junctoes, there are prompters & Actors, accomodators, Candle Snuffers, Shifters of scenes & Mutes.

I have been & am uniformly opposed to all of them. The motives of your friend are pure, he has nothing in view but the happiness of his Country. That pivot & the rest of them, one in particular<sup>7</sup> who stands high in the good graces of your friend, make patriotism the stalking horse to their private Interests & some of them as I am well informed have already mounted to vast paper Money Estates—in sound, equal to any made by that group of Commissaries, Contractors & Tools, who were celebrated by Foote at the end of the late War.<sup>8</sup> This Game at the public expence, cannot be successful played without the knowledge & the Aid of a Circle. Those among them who love Money best, must sacrifice peace Offerings to the passion of those of their Colleagues whose ambition is most impetuous, & some there are whose vanity & avarice must both be fed. All these in course of time will be exposed to public view—at present they seem to triumph. God knows I feel no regret from private considerations, I never touched, I desire never to touch public Money, & I have no ambition to gratify. I feel for my Country—I feel for thirteen Infant States. I have delivered my sentiments very freely against Mal-administration & pointed to that of the “one in particular” nor will I ever spare my honest opinion, when it shall be proper to deliver it. To break the combination is a work not to be easily, nor suddenly performed, & you will perceive it is the more difficult from the texture which I have very fairly described.

I will attend to all their movements & have set my face against every wicked attempt however specious, but there is no other measure so likely to defeat the projects against your friend as a Steady perseverance in Duty, of which he if I may judge from his conduct, is truly sensible. His virtues are admitted & admired by *all* Men & if there be such a Devil in the opposition as a rooted Enemy to him, yet even *his knowledge* of Mankind must dictate despair of degrading that worthy Man without the procurement of his own consent & Aid. These I trust he will never afford to him or them. In his would be involved the ruin of our Cause. On the other hand his magnanimity, his patience will save his Country & confound his Enemies. Com-

parison, I have often heard, of the miscarriages & inactivity in the Southern, with the successes in the Northern department, but I have never been at a loss for argument to convince reasonable Men, there was no ground for censure in one Case, & that in the other we had been *fortunate*. It would be useless to relate stuff of this Class, Men of sense treat these things with contempt.

The affair of G.C.<sup>9</sup> which has so deeply affected you must be a little troublesome to your friend—but it cannot long continue so, if the fact relative to the Letter be exactly as you have been informed—every Man of honour & sensibility throughout these states will feel himself wounded & will think & speak of the circumstance according to its demerit. While I lay Ill of the Gout the G——<sup>10</sup> explained that transaction to me, but in much softer language than your quotation speaks,<sup>11</sup> indeed he denied there was such a sentence in his Letter & averred he had spoken of your friend in terms of respect. However there was *something* in the manner of his representation which raised doubts in my mind, the correspondence even under favour of his own narrative appeared to me to have been indiscreet & dangerous. I never wished for you more in my Life than I did upon that occasion. I have no body here to whom I can with pleasure & safety unbosom myself, but do not mistake, I have not lowered my tone when I am called upon to speak of public Men & public measures. I have been twice called to account by a Stricken Deer & I suppose stand open at this instant to a third attack by Interrogatories. The Visitor who came next to my Bedside introduced the subject which the G. had just dropped. I very candidly said, according to the G's explication there appeared no criminal intention, but there was something about it which did not look well. The G's late behaviour towards your friend is, in my judgement, through the whole, very reprehensible, but the taunts & sarcasm contained under the 31st December are unbecoming his Character & unpardonable.<sup>12</sup> Your friends Letter & the correspondence which accompanied it are committed to the B.W.<sup>13</sup> The event will be known in two or three days, I hope there will be no appearance of disrespect by delay—the occurrence demands attention & determination.

I could not forbear remarking because it produced a striking evidence of party-affection & prejudice, to say nothing of Ill manners & breach of Order, when I had the name of Baron d'Arendt it was instantly followed in a loud voice, "as great a Rascal as any in the Army." Pray Sir, tell me who is this Baron d'Arendt who is also Stigmatized by the same tongue, as an Indolent worthless Creature.<sup>14</sup>

G.W. must be willfully blind if he cannot discover such glaring defects in a Man's character as denominate him a first rate Rascal. I have no apprehensions that he is so—it is impossible that he should recommend such a Character to an important trust.

Your private opinion is that G.C. never meant to act in his late

appointment—my private opinion was from the first, that he did not mean to cross the Atlantic until he had made further attempts on this side.<sup>15</sup> Our first conversation justified my conjecture. I was not satisfied of the propriety of his returning to the Army, but from the high opinion generally entertained of him, I wished he were sent to Georgia & to conduct an expedition a little further South. I proposed the subject for his consideration & he most heartily approved of it. What may follow the present appeal is uncertain, Mens Mouths are shut, they wait to hear a Report, but you know me & after what I have said you know it is not in my power to take any part but that which Conscience & honour have dictated. I have made my Report—here the Subject must rest a few days.

I have heard nothing yet in favor of your friend Duplaisis, if it falls to my Lot to give him a Commission a Resolution of Congress shall be annexed to it.<sup>16</sup>

You must excuse this patch work, I began it yesterday Morning, 'tis now 10 at Night the 9th. This finishing Stroke is the 6th effort to complete the performance & I have not time to make a second impression, I'll go to Bed now, & add in the Morning any thing that may occur, but first to answer your enquiry about my Gout, I am still extremely lame, unable to walk to the Court House, the Ankle on the left is now, as it is every night, as thick as the Calf of the Leg, however I laid by the Crutches two days ago, & can hobble about house supported by a Cane, in a word the fit has been exceedingly severe, & has deducted two & thirty bottles of Madeira from my ordinary allowance. I have not tasted a drop since the 8th December & I still feel a reluctance, which against all opinion, is convincing to me that however palatable that Wine is not friendly to my feet. When I am perfectly restored, if experience may speak, there will be pleadings against partiality.

10th By Candle Light. I intend to write to our friend in St. Mary Axe<sup>17</sup> by Mr. Batwell, in a Style which I hope he will understand & that it will not be too late to prevent the Evils which his Letters have invited, in the mean time I cannot shake off the anxiety lately mentioned. I am often exercised by debates in my mind on the propriety of recommending to my Brother & Sister to come out to Philadelphia or New York & to bring all the Childrens with them. I mean also to include your family with your consent. From Mr. M's<sup>18</sup> Letter which I now return there is no reason to expect your Wife will come with Mrs. B., & you have put an effectual Bar to your personal attendance, which seems to be the most desired.

I may truly say my mind is exercised by this subject, it is very often so, & as often do I wish for that aid, at least for that alleviation, which might be derived from your conversation. But you seem to be wholly



absorbed by one passion. If you have marked for your self any limit, I am ignorant of it. What shall I say to our friends on this head?

Upon a review of the former parts of this Letter I have determined how it ought to be disposed of after you shall have read it, you will undoubtedly be of the same opinion & act accordingly.

My Dear Son. I pray God to bless & guide you &ca. I will thank you for as explicit an account as you can collect of all the prizes lately made in Delaware on both shores.<sup>19</sup>

P.M. 10th. I am just returned from a large Company where I heard a discussion I should say such a discussion on the necessity of appointing a Quarter Master General & the recommendations of your friend & his opinions treated with so much indiscreet freedom & Levity as affected me exceedingly & convinced me that your suspicions of a baneful influence are not ill founded. It would give me too much pain to repeat the Comparison drawn or rather the parallel between de Arendt & Hay.<sup>20</sup> Let us have a little more patience. We shall discover if there is a system to overturn & Rule—for aught I know, to throw into Confusion & bring in the ancient Rule.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> John Laurens' January 3 letter, in which he warned of a plot by Gen. Thomas Conway and others to undermine Washington, is in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 101–4.

<sup>3</sup> Washington's January 2 letter to President Laurens is in PCC, item 152, 5:237–38, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:249–50. Enclosed with it were December 29 and 31 letters from General Conway to Washington as well as a December 30 letter from Washington to Conway. PCC, item 152, 5:241–42; Washington Papers, DLC; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:226n.7, 227n.9. These letters clearly revealed Washington's coolness toward Conway's recent appointment as inspector general of the Continental Army and amply showed the depth of ill-feeling that existed between the two men. For a discussion of the animosity between Washington and Conway in the larger context of the so-called Conway Cabal, see James Lovell to Horatio Gates, November 27, 1777, note 1.

<sup>4</sup> That is, Washington.

<sup>5</sup> See Laurens to John Laurens, November 15, 1777. The “Man . . . alluded to” in that letter—and the object of Laurens' harsh strictures in the remainder of this paragraph of the present letter—is former President John Hancock. Although Burnett argued that Gen. Thomas Mifflin was the object of Laurens' sharp comments, it is clear that he simply overlooked the allusion to Hancock in Laurens' November 15 letter to his son. See Burnett, *Letters*, 3:21n.6.

<sup>6</sup> Undoubtedly a reference to Gen. Thomas Mifflin. As John Laurens alleged in his January 3 letter to his father, Conway “has weight it seems with a certain party, formed against the present Commander in chief, at the head of which is Genl. Mifflin.” Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps Robert Morris, of whom Laurens became increasingly critical in ensuing months. See John Penn to Robert Morris, February 4, note; and Laurens to Samuel Adams, March 7, 1778.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Foote (1720–77), British actor and playwright, published *The Commissary, a Comedy in Three Acts*, in London in 1765. *DNB*.

<sup>9</sup> General Conway.

<sup>10</sup> That is, General Conway.

<sup>11</sup> In his January 3 letter John Laurens cited the more familiar version of the criticism of Washington that Conway was rumored to have expressed in a private letter to Gates: "Heaven has been determined to save your country, or a weak general and bad counsellors would have ruined it." Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, p. 102. For another version of this celebrated remark, see Laurens to Isaac Motte, January 26, 1778, note 5.

<sup>12</sup> It was in his December 31 letter to Washington that Conway flippantly compared the commander in chief with Frederick the Great of Prussia. Washington Papers, DLC; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:228n.9. Apparently Laurens was as outraged by this example of Conway's sarcasm as by the criticism of Washington contained in Conway's earlier letter to Gates. He not only made a copy of Conway's letter to Washington for himself, but also penned the following comments on the back of it.

"Compare this with Mr. Conway's Letter to General Gates in which he writes 'What Pity there is but one Gates but the more I see of this Army the less I think it fit for action under its actual Chiefs & actual discipline—& wish I could serve under you.'

"The whole Letter contains charges against General Washington of a very high nature.

"Mr Conway was always one of General Washington's Council & lived upon terms of respect & friendship with him.

"From such Comparison this conclusion must be drawn—General Conway was guilty of gross hypocrisy or gross & unpardonable Insult when He wrote the within Letter." Laurens Papers, ScHi.

<sup>13</sup> The Board of War, which took no formal action on the Washington-Conway letters submitted to it. See also note 3 above.

<sup>14</sup> In his January 2 letter to President Laurens Washington insinuated that Baron d'Arendt, commander of a German battalion in the Continental Army, would have been a more suitable appointee as inspector general than Conway. Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:249–50. Writing to his father on January 23, John Laurens conceded that some Continental officers had called "the baron's probity into question" but denied that Washington himself had "seen or heard any thing of this gentleman that could give him an unfavorable opinion of him." Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 109–10.

<sup>15</sup> Conway had been promoted to major general and appointed inspector general of the Continental Army on December 13. *JCC*, 9:1026.

<sup>16</sup> Upon Washington's recommendation, Congress on January 19 granted a "brevet of lieutenant colonel" to Thomas Antoine, chevalier de Mauduit du Plessis. *JCC*, 10:64.

<sup>17</sup> The street in London where William Manning, Laurens' friend and John Laurens' father-in-law, resided. All the relatives mentioned by Laurens in this paragraph were living in England. David D. Wallace, *The Life of Henry Laurens* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), pp. 226, 464–68.

<sup>18</sup> William Manning.

<sup>19</sup> John Laurens complied with this request in his January 23 letter to his father. Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, p. 110.

<sup>20</sup> Lt. Col. Udney Hay of Pennsylvania, assistant deputy quartermaster general, 1776–78.

## John Witherspoon's Speech in Congress

Mr President,

[January 8, 1778]<sup>1</sup>

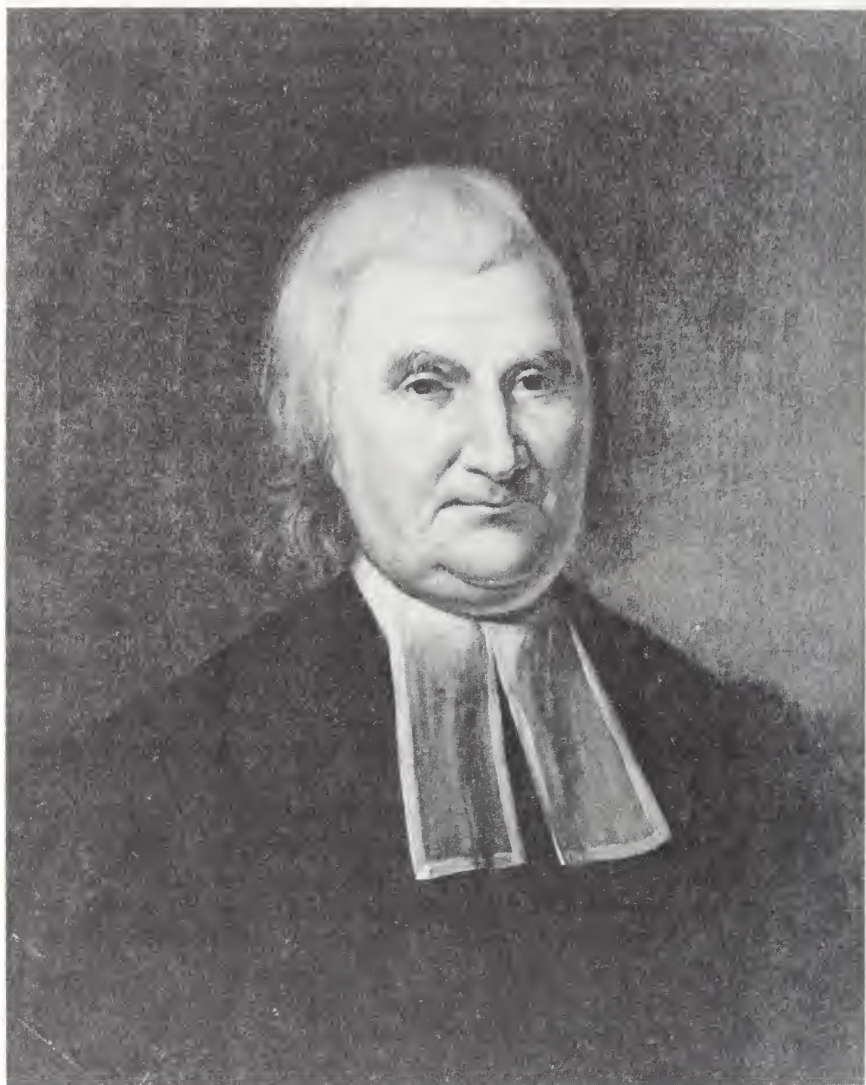
I am sensible, as every other gentleman in this house seems to be, of the great importance of the present question. It is of much moment, as to private persons, so to every incorporated society, to preserve its faith and honour in solemn contracts: and it is especially so to us, as representing the United States of America, associated so lately, and just beginning to appear upon the public stage. I hope, therefore, we shall detest the thoughts of embracing any measure which shall but appear to be mean, captious, or insidious, whatever advantage may seem to arise from it. On the other hand, as the interest of this continent is committed to our care, it is our duty, and it will be expected of us, that we give the utmost attention that the public suffer no injury by deception, or abuse and insult, on the part of our enemies.

On the first of these principles, it is clearly my opinion, that we ought, agreeably to the spirit of the first resolution reported,<sup>2</sup> to find, that the convention is not so broken, on the part of General Burgoyne, as to entitle us to refuse compliance with it on ours, and detain him and his army as prisoners of war. I admit that there is something very suspicious in the circumstance of the colours, when compared with his letter in the London Gazette, which makes mention of the British colours being seen flying upon the fort.<sup>3</sup> I agree, at the same time, that the pretence of the cartouch boxes not being mentioned in the convention is plainly an evasion. They ought, in fair construction, to be comprehended under more expressions of that capitulation than one—arms, ammunition, war-like stores. They were so understood at the capitulation of St. John's. In this present instance many of them were delivered up, which certainly ought to have been the case with all or none. And once more, I admit that the detention of the bayonets in the instances in which it was done, was undeniably unjust.

As to the first of these particulars, I am unwilling to distrust the honour of a gentleman solemnly given; and therefore as General Burgoyne has given his honour to General Gates, that the colours were left in Canada, I suppose it is substantially true, whatever small exception there might be to it. The colours seen flying at Tyconderoga, were perhaps old colours occasionally found there, or perhaps taken from some of the vessels lying at the place, and left there when the army proceeded farther up the country. This is the rather probable, that if the regiments in general had had colours, they must have been seen very frequently by our army in the battles, or upon the march.

As to the other circumstances, they are so mean and little in their





John Witherspoon

nature, that I suppose them to have arisen from the indiscretion of individuals, quite unknown to the commander in chief, or even to the officers in general.

We ought also to consider that it was so unexpected, and must have been so humiliating a thing, for a whole British army to surrender their arms, and deliver themselves up prisoners to those of whom they had been accustomed to speak with such contempt and disdain—that it is not to be wondered at, if the common soldiers did some things out of spite and ill humour, not to be justified. To all these considerations, I will only add, that though the want of the colours deprives us of some ensigns of triumph which it would have been very grateful to the different states to have distributed among them, and to have preserved as monuments of our victory, the other things are so trifling and unessential, that it would probably be considered as taking an undue advantage, if we should retain the whole army here on that account. I would therefore, Sir, have it clearly asserted, that though we are not insensible of those irregularities, and they may contribute to make us attentive to what shall hereafter pass before the embarkation, we do not consider them as such breaches of the convention, as will authorize us in justice to declare it void.

On the other hand, Sir, it is our indispensable duty to use the greatest vigilance, and to act with the greatest firmness, in seeing that justice be done to the American States. Not only caution, but what I may call jealousy and suspicion, is neither unreasonable nor indecent in such a case. This will be justified by the knowledge of mankind. History affords us many examples of evasive and artful conduct in some of the greatest men and most respectable nations, when hard pressed by their necessities, or when a great advantage was in view. The behaviour of the Romans when their army was taken at the Caudine Forks may be produced as one. The conduct of the Samnites was not overwise; but that of the Romans was dishonourable to the last degree, though there are civilians who defend it. Their consul, after his army had passed through the yoke, a symbol at that time of the utmost infamy, made a peace with the Samnites. The senate refused to ratify it; but kept up a shew of regard to the faith plighted, by delivering up the consul to the Samnites, to be used as they thought proper. That people answered, as was easily suggested by plain common sense, that it was no reparation at all to them to torment or put one man to death; but that if they disavowed the treaty, they ought to send back the army to the same spot of ground in which they had been surrounded. No such thing, however, was done. But the Romans, notwithstanding, immediately broke the league; and with the same army which had been let go, or a great part of it, brought the unhappy Samnites to destruction. Such instances may be brought from modern as well as ancient times. It is even the opinion of many persons of the best judgment, that the convention

entered into by the late duke of Cumberland, was by no means strictly observed by the court of London.<sup>4</sup>

When I consider this, Sir, I confess I look upon the expression in General Burgoyne's letter to General Gates, of November 14, as of the most alarming nature. For no other or better reason, even so much as pretended, than his quarters were not so commodious as he expected, he declares *the public faith is broke, and we are the immediate sufferers*. In this he expressly declares and subscribes his opinion, that the convention is broken on our part; and in the last expression, we are the *immediate* sufferers, every person must perceive a menacing intimation of who shall be the sufferers when he shall have it in his power.

Being sufficiently settled as to the principle on which I shall found my opinion, it is unnecessary for me to give an account of the law of nature and nations, or to heap up citations from the numerous writers on that subject. But that what I shall say may have the greater force, I beg it may be observed, that the law of nature and nations is nothing else but the law of general reason, or those obligations of duty from reason and conscience, on one individual to another, antecedent to any particular law derived from the social compact, or even actual consent. On this account, it is called the law of nature; and because there are very rarely to be found any parties in such a free state with regard to each other, except independent nations, therefore it is also called the law of nations. One nation to another is just as man to man in a state of nature. Keeping this in view, a person of integrity will pass as sound a judgment on subjects of this kind, by consulting his own heart, as by turning over books and systems. The chief use of books and systems is, to apply the principle to particular cases and suppositions differently classed, and to point out the practice of nations in several minute and special particulars, which unless ascertained by practice, would be very uncertain and ambiguous.

But, Sir, I must beg your attention, and that of the house, to the nature of the case before us—at least as I think it ought to be stated. I am afraid that some members may be misled, by considering this declaration of General Burgoyne as an irregularity of the same species, if I may speak so, with the other indiscretions or even frauds, if you please to call them so, of withholding the cartouch boxes, or hiding or stealing the bayonets. The question is not, whether this or the other thing done by the army is a breach of the convention. I have for my part given up all these particulars, and declared my willingness to ratify the convention, after I have heard them and believe them to be true. But we have here the declared opinion of one of the parties, that the public faith is broken by the other. Now, the simplest man in the world knows, that a mutual onerous contract is always conditional; and that if the condition fails on one



side, whether from necessity or fraud, the other is free. Therefore we have reason to conclude, that if Mr Burgoyne is of opinion that the convention is broken on our part, he will not hold to it on his. He would act the part of a fool if he did. It is of no consequence to say his opinion is ill-founded or unjust, as it manifestly is in the present case; for whether it is just or unjust, if it is *really* his opinion (and we should wrong his sincerity to doubt it) the consequences are the same with respect to us. Men do often, perhaps generally, adhere with greater obstinacy to opinions that are ill, than those that are well founded, and avenge imaginary or trifling injuries with greater violence than those that are real and great. Nay, we may draw an argument for our danger from the very injustice of his complaint. If he has conceived the convention to be broken on so frivolous a pretense as that his lodging is not quite commodious, after the just caution inserted by General Gates in the preliminary articles, what have we to expect from him as soon as he shall recover his liberty, and the power of doing mischief? It shews a disposition to find fault, and an impatience under his present confinement, the future effects of which we have the greatest reason to dread.

The more I consider this matter, Sir, the more it strikes me with its force. General Gates says upon the subject of accommodation, *granted as far as circumstances will admit*. Was not this proper and necessary? It was very natural to suppose that General Burgoyne, accustomed to the splendor of the British court, and possessed with ideas of his own importance, would be but ill pleased with the best accommodations that could be obtained for him, and his numerous followers, in one of the frugal states of New England. It was also in the neighbourhood of a place not in the least expecting the honour of such guests, which had been long the seat of war which had been exhausted by our army, and plundered by their's. One would have thought that the recollection of the ruin of Charlestown, the burning of which, if I mistake not, in a letter of his from Boston to England, he calls a glorious light, might have prevented his complaints, even though he had less elbow room than he wished for. But as circumstances stand, by what conduct shall we be able to satisfy him? When will pretences ever be wanting to one seeking to prove the convention broken, when it is his inclination or his interest to do so?

It has been said, Sir, that we ought not to take this declaration of his in so serious a manner: that it was written rashly, and in the heat of passion; and that he did not mean that we should dread such consequences from it. All this I believe to be strictly true. It probably fell from him in passion—and very unadvisedly. But is he the first person that has rashly betrayed his own mischievous designs? Or is this a reason for our not availing ourselves of the happy discovery? His folly in this instance is our good fortune. He is a man, Sir, whom

I never saw, though I have been more than once in England; but if I should say I did not know him, after having read his lofty and sonorous proclamation,<sup>5</sup> and some other productions, I should say what was not true. He is evidently a man showy, vain, impetuous, and rash. It is reported of General Gates, from whom I never heard that any other words of boasting or ostentation fell, that he said he knew Burgoyne, and that he could build a wall for him to run his head against I do not by any means approve of boasting in general. I think a man should not boast of what he has done, much less of what he only means to do; yet I cannot help saying, that this was a soft accurate prediction, which, with the event that followed it, plainly points out to us the character of General Burgoyne. Do you think that such a man would not take the advantage of this pretended breach of the convention on our part; and endeavour to wipe off the reproach of his late ignominious surrender by some signal or desperate undertaking? <sup>6</sup>

MS not found; reprinted from John Witherspoon, *The Works of John Witherspoon* . . . , 9 vols. (Edinburgh: J. Ogle, 1815), 9:108-16.

<sup>1</sup> Although Burnett tentatively dated this speech January 2, 1778, there is reason to believe it was actually intended for delivery on January 8. Witherspoon's mention in the second paragraph of "the first resolution reported" appears to be a reference to the first resolution of the revised committee of the whole report on the Saratoga Convention that was submitted to and approved by Congress on January 8, rather than the first resolution of the report on this issue that was offered to Congress on December 26 by the committee on the convention and then considered in committee of the whole on December 26-27, January 2-3. The first resolve of the December report dealt with General Burgoyne's ill-fated remark in a November 14 letter to General Gates that "the public faith is broke," which Congress did use to justify suspending the convention, whereas the first article of the January report concerned British failure to surrender to Gates all their "cartouch boxes and several other articles of military accoutrement," which was not considered in itself sufficient justification for suspension. Witherspoon was a member of the committee that wrote the original report submitted to Congress on December 26 and the revised version approved by Congress on January 8. Therefore it is probable that he prepared this speech for delivery on the 8th in order to remove any lingering doubts among the delegates about the wisdom and justice of delaying the return of Burgoyne's army to England until after the British court had ratified the convention. See *JCC*, 9:1034, 1054-55, 1058-64, 10:13-14, 16-17, 29-35; Burnett, *Letters*, 3:5n.2; and Henry Laurens to William Heath, December 27, 1777, note 1.

<sup>2</sup> See *JCC*, 10:34-35.

<sup>3</sup> See *JCC*, 9:1060.

<sup>4</sup> A reference to the 1757 Convention of Klosterzeven, on which see Richard Henry Lee to George Washington, November 20, 1777, note 5.

<sup>5</sup> A reference to a notoriously boastful proclamation issued by Burgoyne on June 20, 1777, that long riled many Americans. See Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, August 17, 1777, note 5.

<sup>6</sup> As part of his work on the committee appointed December 18 to consider alleged British infractions of the Saratoga Convention, Witherspoon prepared the following draft report. Whether it was submitted to Congress has not been discovered.

"The Committee to which were referred the Convention of Saratoga & the Letters of General Gates, General Heath & General Burgoyne upon that Subject beg Leave to report the following State of Facts

"That some of the Belts & car[t]ouch Boxes of the Soldiers were not delivered up with the Arms.

"That the Word Accoutrements was not added to that of Arms in the Convention through oversight.

"That the Case was the very Same at the Capitulation of St. Johns and yet the whole were delivered up as comprehended under the Word Arms.

"That many of the Bayonets were withheld though in general delivered up.

"That many of the Muskets were twisted or damaged and the whole are now returned unfit for use.

"That in the Opinion of General Gates this last was in a good Measure occasioned by want of proper Covering for them and other Accidents.

"That no Standards or Colours were delivered up.

"That General Burgoyne declared on his Honour that the Colours were left in Canada.

"That there is Mention made in the Account published in the London Gazette of the taking Possession of Ticonderoga of the British Colours being seen flying upon the fort.

"That General Burgoyne in his Letter to General Gates of the 14 of Novr says expressly that *the public Faith is broke* on Account of his not having so commodious quarters as he expected.

"That General Gates in the Articles preliminary to the Convention did upon the Subject of Accommodation & other similar Circumstances take a Latitude from the Nature of the thing Saying *as far as Circumstances will admit*.

"That General Burgoyne has refused to give the Names and Description of his Soldiers & refers to General Carltons Dismission of our Soldiers under Parole not to serve during the War.

"That the Committee on Enquiry find that General Carlton made all our Prisoners sign their Names to a Paper containing Columns describing the Province, County & Town from which each of them came.

"Resolved that the whole Soldiers under General Burgoyne shall before they embark be obliged to sign a Parole with a Description of their Place of Abode exactly in the same form as that required by General Carlton." Witherspoon Papers, DLC.

For a longer "State of Facts" about the convention that definitely was known to a number of delegates outside the circle of this committee, see James Lovell to John Adams, January 21, 1778, enclosure.

## North Carolina Delegates to Richard Caswell

Sir York Town Jany 9th. 1778

Colo. Palfrey paymaster Genl. this day informed us that Doctor Guyon paymaster to some No. Carolina Battalions, has returned home without settling his account, and that our officers Complain of his having failed to pay the men. We are also told that Doctor Guyon is about leaving No. Carolina and going to some of the Islands. We thought it our duty to give your Excellency this information that should the report be true, you might be able to put a stop to Doctor Guyon's going off. It is said he has recd. very large sums



of money, we hope there is no real foundation for a charge of so black a nature but at any rate a proper inquiry should be made.

It gives us great concern that we have not recd. a single letter from your Excellency or from the General Assembly since their meeting, it is absolutely proper that some General officers should be appointed for our State to Command the Troops from there, we were under difficulties & wrote to the assembly desiring that we might be informed wch. of the Colos. should be promoted. Colo. Martin has resigned, we should be glad to receive any Commands that the Assembly may think proper to send us.

We got the favr. of Alexr. Gillon esqr. of So. Carolina & Mr. Robinson to take twelve copies of the articles of Confederation which they promised to send to you by express from Halifax, we hope they have come to hand long before this.

The President will send all the resolves of Congress himself to the different states wch. is one reason of our not writing so often as we should.

General Washington's Army is about 23 miles from Phila. in Huts near the Schuylkill as the most convenient place to prevent the enemy from plundering the Country.

A few days ago a large brig was blown a shore five miles below Wilmington and taken by Genl. Smallwood, it proved a valuable prize there being 7500 stand of arms, Baggage for the officers of 4 Regiments & a quantity of wine & spirits, three other vessels are said to be drove on shore on the Jersey side, the Inhabitants are taking proper care of their Cargoes. We have the Honor to be with great respect, Your Excellencys Most obt., Hble Servts.

J. Penn

Cornl. Harnett

RC (MA). Written by Penn and signed by Penn and Harnett. Addressed: "His Excellency Richard Caswell Esqr., Governor &c of the State of North Carolina." Endorsed: "Answered 7 Feb." See *N.C. State Records*, 13:31-32.

## Henry Laurens to John Clark

Sir,

York Town 10th January 1778

You are appointed an Auditor of Public Accounts in the Main Army, as appears by the Inclosed Act of Congress.<sup>1</sup>

If you are pleased to accept the Office Congress will expect you to enter upon the Execution of the Duties as soon as you conveniently can.

I am with great Regard, Sir, Your obedt. & humble servt.

Henry Laurens, President of Congress<sup>2</sup>

RC (DNA: PCC, item 41). Addressed: "Major John Clark Esquire, York Town."

<sup>1</sup> This day Congress elected Major Clark and Matthew Clarkson "to audit and settle public accounts in the main army." The two signified acceptance of their appointment in letters that Congress read on February 11 and 4 respectively. See *JCC*, 10:38, 121, 131-37, 143; and Daniel Roberdeau to John Clark, February 9, 1778, note 1. Laurens informed Clarkson of his appointment in a letter that was apparently written around January 17. PCC, item 13, fol. 137. See also Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:250, 346-47.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens also wrote a letter this day to Francis Lewis, Jr., enclosing "One hundred & twenty Dollars for purchasing divers articles at Baltimore which are to be returned in a light Waggon under the direction of Alexr McKonkie." Laurens Papers, ScHi. Lewis, who was residing in Baltimore, was the son of New York delegate Francis Lewis.

## Marine Committee to William Smith

Sir

January 10th 1778

Two thousand Barrels flour & 100 Tons Iron is wanted to send to the Eastward for the use of the Navy. As flour hath become scarce and dear in the Jerseys and all that can be got there will be wanted for the Army, it is doubtful whether we can insure that quantity to be delivered at Egg Harbour to be shipped on board Vessels to be sent from the Eastward, we desire your opinion whether that quantity cannot be procured on reasonable terms either in Maryland or Virginia contiguous to some secure port on the Eastern Shore where vessels can come to & return from without danger from the enemy.<sup>1</sup> If it can we desire your advice who to employ for that purpose and shall order vessels accordingly.

We are sir, Yr. hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> Smith, who had been appointed to the Marine Committee in April 1777, probably had returned home shortly after learning that the Maryland Assembly had not included him in the delegation appointed on December 22, but he continued to serve as an agent of the committee at Baltimore for several years. See *JCC*, 7:312-13; 10:59; and Burnett, *Letters*, 2:xlix-1.

## Henry Laurens to Augustin Mottin de La Balme

Sir,

11th Jany 1778

The business even of this day of Rest has prevented an earlier attention to your favour which was laid on my Table this Morning.<sup>1</sup>

I am far from disapproving your reflections on the Canada project, or disliking your plan for an exertion in that quarter, as far as I have learned & can judge of your propositions they merit encouragement,

but the Consideration rests at present wholly with the Board of War. Your applications therefore directed to the Gentlemen of that Commission will be most likely to forward your wishes in promoting a measure which I think promises real benefit to these States. I am &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Colonel dela Balme, York."

<sup>1</sup> In his undated letter to Laurens, Colonel de La Balme, the former inspector general of Continental cavalry, offered to present to Congress a plan for exciting a "Revolution" in Canada. PCC, item 78, 7:149-50. On January 13 his letter was referred to the Board of War, which shortly recommended "an irruption . . . into Canada" that Congress approved on January 22. JCC, 10:43-44, 84-85.

## Committee Examination of John Folger

12 Jan. 1778.

The examination of Capt. John Folger<sup>1</sup> of Nantucket taken before Mr. Lee, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Duer, Mr. Dana, Mr. Lovel.

The examinant left Nantucket, Sept. 4. 1775—went from thence to England, as mate of a vessel, of which Cpt. Shubal Worth was commander—arrived in London, in about five weeks. The vessel was sold in London to Mr. Dennis DeBert from whence she sailed December 6 following with the same captain, & the examinant still mate, on a whaling voyage to the Brazils, but was taken at the Cape De Verd Islands by the Portuguese; & this examinant remained at the Cape De Verd Isles, the vessel being sent to Lisbon, where she was acquitted. From the said isles, this examinant sailed, in the ship Nancy, captain Js. Scott, belonging to Francis Roach, on a voyage to Falkland Islands; was upon monthly wages on board said vessel—left Falkland islands Feby. 1777; arrived in England the beginning of May. From England he went to Holland, 1st June 1777, arrived there 3 days after. His intention in going to Holland was, to go to France; whither he did not choose to go directly; he went immediately to Havre de Grace from Holland. His view in going to France was, to get into American employ—called on Mr. Deane at Paris—had no letter to him. Dr. Franklin a distant relation of his. Dr. Franklin asked him, whether he inclined to take a privateer. He told the Doctor, he had never been concerned in the working of cannon, & therefore could not take the command of a privateer. Saw a Mr. Lee, but not Dr. Lee, at Paris. Dr. Lee was gone to Prussia. They desired he would be still, until they could determine what part of the French coast he should go to—was in Paris 18 days, leaving it July 15. It was concluded that he should go to Havre to view the Pacifique, which the Commissioners intended to buy; he reported her very deficient, & she was not purchased. About the 20 of July, Capt. Hinson came



to Havre, & he was jointly to view the *Pacifique*—remained at Havre for two months, in the employ of the Commissioners. After the vessel was given up, he sent word by Mr. Silas Deane's Brother to the commissioners, that he should tarry for further instructions. About the 9 of October, he received a letter from Mr. Deane, desiring him to take the command of a swift sailing vessel, intended to go with dispatches to Congress. He received with the letter a packet for Congress. He found at Havre a sloop, in which he arrived in America. He did not know the person who brought the letter from Mr. Deane with the packet. He lodged at Madame Moreaw's, in which one Haley her son in law also lodged. The house was near the water upon the pier. He eat with Haley & his family. Captain Hinson lodged in the same house. The person, who brought him the packet, told him where the vessel lay. Hinson, Haley & Examinant always eat together in a common room, but had each a chamber to themselves to sleep in. The chambers were not locked. On the arrival of the person from Paris, examinant was abroad, so the person was told to call in an hour. The person when he came again, desired the examinant to write his name which he did; on which the person gave him the letter & packet, & gave Capt Hinson another, about the size of the letter directed for him. The messenger could talk little English. The examinant read his letter to Hinson, who after reading his own letter, asked the examinant what he determined upon. The examinant told him he intended to come, upon which no more passed upon the subject. After receiving the packet, he directly locked it up in his trunk, in the chamber where he lay, & believes his trunk was not opened by any person but himself. He gave a receipt to the Messenger for five packets—one was marked "dispatches," wrapped in brown paper—sealed in two or three places—tied with a string—no wax over the string—no impression on the seals. A packet sealed with no directions, was also delivered: He thought it further instructions to him, broke it open; found it contained two letters, one for Mr. Hancock, & the other for Richard Henry Lee Esqr. Another packet directed to Barnabas Deane of Connecticut—another to the same which was only a plan of Paris—gave a receipt mentioning only the number without describing the packetts. The 5th packet was newspaper, covered in the same manner with the rest, but had no direction: he broke it open before he knew what it was. The papers in the cover marked A, were enclosed between the newspapers directed to Richard H. Lee. He opened the packets on the road from Wilmington to New Bern about 28 miles. The Wrapper contained two packetts, both of which he delivered to col. F. Lee last night. This packett got wet by a bottle of spirits in his saddle bags. No packet directed to R. Morris Esqr.—moved his trunk & the papers in it from his lodgings at Havre, on board the vessel. Capt. Errico was the commander of the sloop in which he sailed from Havre. She was cleared out for St.

Domingo, & manned with Frenchmen. Two Passengers; a Frenchman, Boileau; a German, Pittnier. The examinant lay in a separate cabbín & took great care of the chest, in which the papers were. He informed the captain & mate, that he had dispatches for Congress; the passengers knew it. He never mentioned at Havre his having these papers to any one but Hinson. He took a boat at a town three leagues below Wilmington (North Carolina) & brought his trunk to Wilmington on the 21 of December. He landed at the first town on the 20 of Decr.—was ashore three or four hours—had his keys in his pocket—left his trunk in the vessel. The whole of the papers were put in a canvas bag, & tied up at Havre de Grace; where he put weights in it, in order to sink it—the bag was not disturbed from the time of his leaving Havre, until his arrival at the town below Wilmington, except once, on the passage, when he opened it, & took out the plan of Paris, which was under cover, directed for B. Deane. He lodged at Wilmington at one capt. Hinson's who kept a tavern, where he remained four days. Had a room to himself where the trunk & his chest lay—no key to the room. He sold all the things he could not bring in his saddle bags at public auction, having no more than 5 crowns which he brought from France. The next day after his arrival at Wilmington, he took out the iron weights. He left Wilmington the 24 Dec. last. He did not examine his bags, until he got 28 miles from Wilmington. He there examined them, & found Mr. Lee's packet wet as above. The main packet not in the same end of the saddle bags. He broke open none, but that one only which was wet. Within eight miles of Newbern, he met with govr. Casswell on the 26 Decr., & two other gentlemen, one a col. Alcott. They interrogated him so closely, that after some time, he told them he came from France in a French vessel, the captain of which was a stage behind, on his way to see His Excellency, upon which, one of the gentlemen told him, *that* was his Excellency, pointing to govr. Casswell, whom he did not at first know. They all lodged at the same house that night. He shewed govr. Casswell the letter he had from Mr. Deane, which he shewed to the President. He desired the Governor's passport which he procured—marked B & C. He asked his Excellency, not knowing whether he might not suspect him, as Mr. Dean's letter was unsigned, whether he had a mind to see his papers—took out the main packet directed Dispatches & did not think of his breaking it open—were in a private room together. The Govr. broke it open—the examinant informed him it never had been broken open before. After he had broken open the 3 seals, with which the wrapper was sealed, he run over the superscriptions of the letters, & saw to whom they were directed. He resealed the packet marked dispatches, putting into it, the same letters. When the governor saw the blank paper he said, he was surprized & did not know the service of sending clean paper so far. The examinant answered he was surprized & did not know he had clean paper

under his care. They both assisted in repacking the letters, & the next morning the governor gave him the passes. The passengers he left at Wilmington selling some goods they had brought. Boileau talked of coming into Virginia. On the road he found the covering of the large packet wet by rain, & then he wrapped it up in a piece of brown paper unsealed, having torn off the original wrapper, but put on no direction at all—arrived in York Town, about 3 O’Clock yesterday afternoon—put up at Steak’s—shifted himself, & then went to deliver his letters. He mentioned to some persons at Steak’s that he had letters for Congress, but did not stay to sit down before his going out to deliver them. Had no verbal or other message, to whom to deliver the packet marked “dispatches”—never saw Mr. Deane after he left Paris, or ever received any letter or message from him, but the letter sent with the packets, delivered to the President of Congress. He came passenger in the sloop from Havre. On his arrival at Wilmington in capt. Hinson’s house, where there were several in company, he enquired for a continental agent, for he had goods for Congress; he was told, if You have goods for Congress, that is your man: the person, who told him, pointing to a gentleman then in the room. He informed the person he wanted his assistance. He shewed him the letter from Mr. Deane, & as it was not signed & interlined in one place, he would not give him any money or assistance, upon which the examinant told him, he should inform Congress, unless he would supply him. Shewed him also the joint letter from Mr. Deane & Dr. Franklin. Question. How did You know, to whom You were to deliver the letters or packetts given You at Havre, without directions. Answer. I was governed only by my own judgment, which was that they were to be delivered to Congress. He opened no paper in France; of this he is sure. Did You open the paper marked A? I did not. Had the seal any impression, when delivered to You? It had not. The wax run by holding it to the fire to dry. Had You any particular orders respecting the cargo of the vessel? I had not. How came You to apply to the continental agent at Wilmington, & inform him You had goods for Congress? I wanted assistance to get on my journey. Did You receive any money in France, from the Commissioners? Ans. I did, by their order, 42 Louis, & 12 Livres. For what purpose was this advanced You? To bear my expenses in France. I received it at Havre. Did You receive any money or credit from the Commissioners to bear your expences on the passage, or from the port of arrival to Congress. A. Neither. The paper marked A I knew to belong to Mr. Lee, because it was in the packet with the newspapers directed to him which I had opened.

Are you sure there was not a packet or parcel of papers nearly the Size of that directed dispatches, delivered to You, directed to Robert Morris? There was not. Was the wrapper which You put upon the main packet in place of its original wrapper, which You threw away because it was wet, directed in any manner whatever,



or sealed? No it was a perfect blank, tied by a string crossed over it. Had You any command in the vessel from Havre? None, unless Mr. Deane's letter gave it. Did You act as master or mate? No, I was only a passenger. How came You to say in the beginning of this examination, that You received a letter from Mr. Deane, desiring You to take the command of a swift sailing vessel intended to go with dispatches to Congress? I meant only, of the packet or *papers*. Where did You get the paper with which You wrapped up the main packet? On the road.

The examinant further adds, that there was a large packet, which he delivered to the President, who tore up the seal so far as to see that they were newspapers & said he was mistaken: it belonged to another person; & returned it to the examinant to deliver it, to Mr. Brown at Mr. Steaks's, which the examinant did accordingly. This packet together with one of near the same size, which the president opened, & found to contain only blank papers; were both, together with some letters, inclosed in one wrapper, which the examinant calls the main packet & which was wrote upon *Dispatches*. It is the same which Govr. Caswell opened, & the examinant afterwards took off the cover, & wrapped it up in another cover unsealed but tied, & without any direction, & delivered it so to the President.

True Copy of the original examination, James Lovell

MS (MH-H). In the hand of James Lovell.

<sup>1</sup> Capt. John Folger of Nantucket, Mass., fell under suspicion of stealing a packet of dispatches from the American commissioners at Paris when he arrived at York on January 11 with his official dispatch packet full of blank paper. Congress was at that moment anxiously awaiting news from France because it had not received official letters from there since the preceding August. Not surprisingly, Folger was examined at length the following day by a congressional committee—Francis Dana, William Duer, John Harvie, Francis Lightfoot Lee, and James Lovell—which remained skeptical of the captain's testimony but could only withhold judgment, at least until Governor Caswell of North Carolina had been consulted. Folger had arrived in America at Brunswick, N.C., on December 20, 1777, and Caswell was the first official he had met. In the meantime, Folger was confined "in close prison, till advice can be received from Governor Caswell, or till further orders from Congress."

The depositions from North Carolina enclosed in Caswell's February 7, 1778, letter to Congress failed to clear Folger, but information subsequently received from France revealed that the dispatches had actually been stolen by Capt. Joseph Hynson of Maryland, with whom Folger had lodged when he had originally received them.

Folger was eventually released by Congress after the committee reported on May 8, 1778, that they had "no proof of any guilt in Mr. Folger," and modern historical investigations have revealed that Hynson, who was employed by both the American commissioners and the British secret service, had indeed been the culprit. See *JCC*, 10:41–42, 190, 11:482; *PCC*, item 59, 1:81–107; and Lewis Einstein, *Divided Loyalties; Americans in England during the War of Independence* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1933), pp. 51–71. For Folger's relationship to Benjamin Franklin, through Franklin's grandfather Peter Folger, see Franklin, *Papers* (Labaree), 1:liii–lv.

Committee for Foreign Affairs to the  
Commissioners at Paris

Gentlemen,

York Town Janry. 12th. 1778.

Not having received any letters from you since the 26th of May we were severely chagrined yesterday upon the arrival of Capt. John Folgier, who, under the name of dispatches from the Commissioners at Paris, delivered only an enclosure of clean paper, with some familiar letters, none of which contained any political intelligence.

You will see by the within examination of Folgier<sup>1</sup> that he was by no means a discreet person fit to be trusted with what you committed to his charge; but, we cannot yet prove that he was wilfully connected with the robbers of the packet. The paper referred to by the letter A in the examination was a plain cover to plain paper which had been put into the place of an enclosure, probably very interesting, sent with the *Public Ledgers* to Colonel Richard Henry Lee. We shall endeavour to find whether the roguery was committed after Folgier left France; but, we must depend upon you to trace the circumstances from the time of your sealing to that of his embarking.

Congress have sent to Governour Caswell to explain the part he is said to have taken in the affair and to examine the ship-captain and the two passengers.<sup>2</sup> Should he confirm Folgiers narrative so as to make his veracity less problematical than at present, his confinement may be rendered easier to him; but, he must not be quite discharged till we hear from you.

There ought to be the greatest caution used with regard to the characters of all those persons who are confidentially employed by you. The connexion which Folgier since his leaving America, has had with persons in England & on the voyage to Faulkland's Isles cannot be thought favourable to our interests if his own family & native place are so.

We shall only add, on this subject, that Folgier, upon recollection, asserts that the largest packet delivered to him at Havre de Grace was directed "Dispatches for Capt. Folgier"; and he laments that he did not himself open it before he sailed. If this Circumstance is true, it accounts for Governour Caswell's opening the Packet.

We are with much Regard, Gentlemen, Your humb. Servts,

Jno Witherspoon

James Lovell

RC (NN). Written by Lovell and signed by Lovell and Witherspoon.

<sup>1</sup> See Committee Examination of John Folger, this date.

<sup>2</sup> See Henry Laurens to Richard Caswell, this date.

## James Duane to Henry Laurens

Sir

Albany 12th Janu'y 1778.

I entreat that you will do me the Favour to inform Congress that, as soon as the Commissioners for Indian Affairs in this Department could be convened, I attended them at this City.<sup>1</sup> The Result of our Deliberations they dispatch by Express. The Entreaties<sup>2</sup> and Liberality of our Enemies have made a deeper Impression on the Minds of many of the six nations than Congress apprehended. The Senecas and Cayugaes in particular can, I fear, no longer be regarded as Friends or even Neutrals; while the past Declarations of the Commissioners denouncing Vengeance against them for any Act of Perfidy or Hostility, which they might presume to commit, have engagd Congress, from a Regard to their own Dignity as well as the publick Interest, to proceed to more vigorous and decisive Measures than we had conceivd to be necessary.

But all this is explaind so fully by the Commissioners; as well as our Joint Sentiments on the part which ought to be pursued at the approaching Treaty, that it is needless for me to be particular.<sup>3</sup> These misguided nations must Feel the Power of the united States, since we have not the means of<sup>4</sup> preserving their Fidelity by our Bounty, and they slight our Condescension.

The other important object of my Commiss'n is put in a proper Train.<sup>5</sup> Secrecy with the Blessing of Heaven, will bring it to happy Conclusion. I can foresee no unsurmountable obstacle. The only Person who ought at present to be acquainted with it is clearly of the same Opinion. There being no money in the military Chest I have procurd 2000 Dollars, and it is advanced to the Gentleman to whom I allude.<sup>6</sup>

I have the Honour to be, with all possible Respect Sir, Your most Obedient and very hume servant,

Jas. Duane

RC (NH*i*). Endorsed by Charles Thomson: "Letter from Jas. Duane Esqr. Albany Jan'y 12. 1778. Read 21 [January]. Referred to the board of war." The referral of this letter to the Board of War, of which Horatio Gates was then president, explains its present location among Gates' papers. FC (NH*i*). The FC is dated January 8, 1778. Variations between it and the RC are noted below.

<sup>1</sup> On December 3 Congress had asked Duane "to confer with the commissioners for Indian affairs in the northern department and to give them every aid and assistance in his power, in their deliberations, conferences and treaties with the Indians." *JCC*, 9:994-99.

<sup>2</sup> "Assiduity" in FC.

<sup>3</sup> See the January 12 letter from the commissioners for Indian affairs in the northern department to Laurens, which was read in Congress on January 21, in PCC, item 166, fols. 377-80. For the action Congress took in response to this letter and the one from Duane, see *JCC*, 10:73-74, 105-6, 110-11.

<sup>4</sup> At this point in the FC Duane first wrote "securing their attachment," then deleted it, and finally substituted "retaining their fidelity."

<sup>5</sup> The "object" referred to was the proposed destruction of British shipping



on Lake Champlain by Gen. John Stark. See Duane to Stark, December 16, 1777.

<sup>6</sup> Duane described his dealings with the Indian commissioners and General Stark at greater length in a March 13, 1778, letter to George Clinton which will appear in the next volume of these *Letters*.

## Henry Laurens to Richard Bache

Sir,<sup>1</sup>

12th Jany 1778

I received the Inclosed by a Messenger last Night from France. I judge from the Seals that both are from Doctor Franklin, if yours should contain intelligence Interesting to the public, communicating such to Congress will be very acceptable. We have not a line from our Commissioners, the Messenger delivered me a large packet which when opened disclosed a quantity of blank paper whence we conclude some artful tool of the British Ministry has tricked him of the genuine dispatch & palmed this Counterfeit.

I am with great respect &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Richard Bache was Benjamin Franklin's son-in-law and successor as postmaster general, 1776-82. *DAB*.

## Henry Laurens to Richard Caswell

Sir,

12th Jany 1778

I had the honour of your Excellency's Letter of the 27th December last Evening, brought to me by Mr. John Folger, who delivered me a packet which he said contained dispatches from the Commissioners of these States at Paris—& in the Same instant, intimated that the packet had been opened by your Excellency & found to cover nothing more than a number of pieces of blank paper. To my great grief & mortification I presently discovered the latter part of his information to be true, & accordingly Reported to Congress this Morning. The House was exceedingly chagrined by the disappointment & suspicions were so Strong against the Man, as to occasion an immediate examination into particulars which ended in an order to confine his person until some further enquiry shall be made into this mysterious circumstance.

Congress request your Excellency will be pleased to transmit as early as possible all the information you can collect from the Master & passengers of the Vessel in which Mr. Folger came from France, concerning dispatches which they may have Seen, or heard from him were, in his possession, & also such as Your Excellency can give from your own knowledge.<sup>1</sup>

Upon this Examination he declared—"Within eight Miles of Newbern I met Govr. Caswell on the 26th December & two other Gentlemen one a Colo. Alcot, they questioned me so closely that after some time I told them I came from France in a French Vessel, the Captain of which was a Stage behind on his way to see His Excellency—one of the Gentlemen told me that was His Excellency pointing to Govr. Caswell. We all lodged at the same House that Night, I shewed Govr. Caswell the Letter I had from Mr. Deane, I desired the Governors passport which he gave me. I asked His Excellency not knowing whether he might not suspect me as Mr. Deanes Letter was unsigned whether he had a mind to see my papers & took out the Main packet directed '*dispatches*' & did not think of his breaking it open. We were in a private Room together. The Governor broke it open. I informed him it never had been broke open before, after he had broke open the three Seals with which the wrapper was sealed he run over the directions on the Letters—he resealed the Packet marked '*Dispatches*' (A) putting into it the same Letters—when the Governor saw the Blank paper he said he was surprized & did not know the service of sending clean paper so far, I answered I was surprized & did not know I had clean paper under my care, we both assisted in repacking the Letters & the next Morning the Governor gave me the passes."

The line marked (A) & the next following contains information which implies that Letters were put into the packet of clean paper, but when that packet came to my hand it certainly contained nothing but 35 peices of blank French paper—there was another packet about the size of, or a little larger than, the first which contained foreign news papers & Letters as Congress have been informed, but that was directed to Robt. Morris Esqr. & I sent it to his Clerk with eight other Letters & packets which Folger had laid on my Table.

By the Main Packet he means *this*, & *that*, & intimates that Your Excellency opened both—but the Mans behaviour is such as induces most of the Members of Congress to believe him an Arch Knave affecting the Fool. My private opinion is that he is a very confused stupid Creature altogether unfit for the charge which Mr. Deane committed to him & that some Emissary of the British Court played him a trick before he left France by robbing him of the original Packet & palming this Counterfeit on him. If he is a Knave, he has pressed & prevailed on Your Excellency to look into the packets in order to gloss his Roguery. I will trouble you no further sir with conjectures—but conclude by subscribing with great Respect Esteem &c.

## Henry Laurens to the Clergy of the Middle Department

Reverend Sir,

12th Jany 1778.

In so solemn an Appeal as we have now made to the righteous judge of the whole Earth; it is not enough that our Cause is good, we ought, in order to obtain his favour in the prosecution of this Appeal, to exercise those Virtues which are pleasing to him. The Relief, therefore, of the Sick and Indigent, more especially of such as have been rendered so by hazarding their Lives in the Service of their Country, is our indispensable Duty. From our ports being blocked up, Congress have not been able to provide a Sufficient quantity of Linens & Woollens for the sick, languishing in the Hospitals in the Middle District; and to remedy this have thought proper to order "a Recommendation to be sent to the clergy of all Denominations in the said district, to solicit Donations of Woollens and Linens, made or unmade, for the sick soldiers in the Hospitals, and to send the same to the Board of War, or any Hospital, as may be most convenient."<sup>1</sup> The Congress have a firm Confidence that the Ministers of Christ (who has declared, that he will consider kind offices done to the Sick as done to himself) will exert themselves on the present Occasion.

I am with great respect, Reverend Sir, &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Endorsed: "To the Clergy of all denominations in the Middle district—50 Copies sent Doctor Shippen."

<sup>1</sup> Congress had passed this resolve on January 6. See *JCC*, 10:23.

## Henry Laurens to Patrick Henry

Sir,

12th Jany 1778

On the 1st Inst. I transmitted to your Excellency an Act of Congress appointing John Walker Esquire a Commissioner for Indian affairs at Fort Pitt.<sup>1</sup>

Recent Intelligence from General Hand shewing the necessity for carrying the purposes intended by the Commission into effect without delay, Congress in order to guard against further disappointment have passed the Resolve which your Excellency will find inclosed dated the 10th Curr. requesting your Excellency to supply the deficiency if any shall happen by the refusal of Mr. Jones & Mr. Walker or either of them to serve the public in this very urgent & important business.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honour to be &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens' brief letter of transmittal is in PCC, item 13, fol. 92. See also *JCC*, 10:9.



<sup>2</sup> Writing to the Board of War from Fort Pitt on December 24 and 28, Gen. Edward Hand had given an alarming description of relations with the Indians on the western frontier. PCC, item 159, fols. 423-27.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Johnson

Sir

York Town 12th Jany. 1778

I had the honour of writing to Your Excellency the 1st Inst. by Post. I remain without any of Your Excellency's favours.

Inclosed is an Act of Congress of this date calculated for securing a quantity of Salt lately arrived at Baltimore for Public use, as that article is & from all appearance will be most extremely wanted for the Army service, Congress are anxiously desirous of securing every Cargo that is or shall be imported. The term, "secure" in the Resolve, Your Excellency may be assured comprehends the Idea of purchasing if this shall be judged to be a mean preferable to an Act of power.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be, With great regard, Sir, Your Excellency's, Most obedt. servant, Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (MdAA).

<sup>1</sup> This cargo of salt arrived in Baltimore from Curaçao aboard a sloop owned by Gerardus Beekman, "a citizen of the State of New York, but now with the enemy in the city of Philadelphia." *JCC*, 10:42-43. Johnson wrote to Laurens on January 19 informing him that he had arranged for Congress to purchase the salt "at the common selling Price, which is now 15£ a Bushel." *Md. Archives*, 16:469-70. The governor's action annoyed at least one delegate, who wished that the salt had been seized and sold at a lower price. See James Lovell to Samuel Adams, January 22, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir,

12 Jany 1778

I am grieved by reflecting upon the length of time I have been indebted for the several Letters which you have lately honoured me with under the 14th & 18th of the past, 2d & 5th of the present Month,<sup>1</sup> & more because it is not in my power even now to return such answers as these demand & as I wish to give. That condescension however which is apparent in your kind & indulgent expressions on this head, afford me encouragement & forbid a laboured apology either for past or present unavoidable remissness. I say present, because I confess I am urged to this address by the inclosed Letter which I received from France last Night & which I am anxious to forward without delay, perhaps if this circumstance had not happened I might from a desire of answering all your favours have deferred some days longer—now I shall confine my self to that of the 5th.<sup>2</sup> I say I shall, in obedience to an hundred other calls which say I must.

Very early after my arrival at the State House Philadelphia I discovered the spirit of party triumphant. I lamented the prospect exhibited to my view & predicted certain evil consequences which have naturally followed. I was a Stranger, a by stander, I was careful to take no decided part except that of Speaking & voting according to the dictates of conscience.

I will not boast of having been instrumental in promoting beneficial measures which from all appearance would otherwise have failed, nor of defeating attempts which if they had succeeded would greatly have injured our Cause—you would smile Sir to hear me say that America is a little indebted to me for her successes against the threatening flood of the invincible Burgoyne. If I were to attempt to prove this, it would be with no other view but this of shewing my steady opposition to party—you will conclude therefore that upon questions I have not been found always on one side.

I mean only to say, Yes Sir, I have long known there were divisions among those whose duty required from them as honest Men, Strict Union. I have observed such to be so carefully supplied as never to fail of keeping up a Spark of discord—hence I have often been induced to beleive there were Agents from our Enemies if not within Doors, yet too closely connected with some who sat there.

You will however be pleased to observe Sir, or I should rather say, you very well know Sir, there is no subject more abstruse than this of party, it is said to be the sinews of Liberty, I have neither Leisure nor abilities for going deeply into the enquiry, nor is it necessary. I will only say that party animosity between the Eastern States & the Inhabitants of New York is almost coexistent with the *Inhabitants*.

These are the grand divisions—each has its atmosphere, they are Sometimes very troublesome in their disputes which are carried to such extremes as seem to threaten a dissolution of all friendship, nevertheless, danger from a common Enemy will reduce them to good order & as it were by a Charm, instantly establish a coalition. I have said so much on this Subject in order to remove in Some degree the Strong apprehensions which you seem to be under from reports of prevailing parties in Congress—they make the Road rough but not impassable—so much upon party in general. Concerning the particular influences which you Speak of, I must acknowledge your conjectures are not ill founded. But I think the friends of our brave & virtuous General, may rest assured that he is out of the reach of his Enemies, if he has an Enemy, a fact which I am in doubt of. I beleive I hear most that is said & know the outlines of almost all that has been attempted, but the whole amounts to little more than tittle tattle, which would be too much honoured by repeating it.

All Men acknowledge General Washington's virtue, his personal Bravery, nor do I ever hear his Military abilities questioned but comparatively, with the fortunate event which you allude to, why

cannot General Washington grasp General Howe abounding with every advantage of situation & every necessary article for defence or attack—as General Gates conquered General Burgoyne, under every disadvantage of situation & reduced to the last extremity? Answers are easily given to such silly remarks, when one is disposed to reply.

In a word Sir, be not alarmed, I think it is not in the power of any junto to lessen our friend without his own consent, I trust his good sense & his knowledge of the World, will guard against so fatal an error. If you desire it Sir, Mr. John Laurens will communicate what I have written in confidence to him, I say in confidence, not because I am afraid of having my sentiments known. I speak them honestly & unreservedly upon every proper occasion but I very much dislike correspondencies which may be misunderstood & charged with design to foment dissentions—it is my constant endeavor to reconcile & make peace.

I am not insensible that General Washington has been in several Instances extremely ill used by the neglect of those who ought to be his grand support & to prevent every cause of complaint on his part, but if I were with him half an hour & could persuade myself he wanted information, it would be very easy to convince him there has not any thing been *designedly* done or omitted to affront him. I speak of so large a majority as 9 in 10.

The General very well knows what we are, & will continue to make suitable allowances for all defects seeming or real—we are in a State of infancy, yet thank God, we are not quite so foolish nor so wicked as our Parent. Men whisper & very harmless things too of General Washington—loud bellowing Scandal appears in every Newspaper upon the name of his Antagonist Sir William. But I will dwell no longer upon these matters. A large Committee appointed by Congress of four of its own Members & three from the New Board of War will shortly be in Camp in order to concert measures with the Commander in Chief for the reformation of the Army. God grant every good purpose may be answered by their consultations—to these Gentlemen Sir you are particularly referred for an answer to your last favor without date relative to Monsr. du Pin de Montauban, & also for the desired promotion of Monsr. Gemaut.<sup>3</sup> The powers of this deputation are very ample, I will not say unlimitted.

The Clothing which you had been informed of, Colo. Lee assures me is little more than a collection of old wearing apparel of all shapes & sizes & that the whole is appropriated.

You will learn by the dispatches now sent to General Washington, that Mr. Burgoyne is destined to pass the present Winter in Massachusetts Bay & the reasons which urged Congress to a determination which must undergo the Criticism of all the politicians in the Civilized World. I shall be happy to have the approbation of those in our own Country. If I had not honestly thought the measure justi-



fiable as well as necessary I would not have been a strenuous advocate in favor of it. I think he will appear to have been the dupe of his own policy. The intimation which he gave to Gen. Gates who was at Albany of a breach of Public faith was artfully enough insinuated calculated for a particular purpose but not intended for the view of Congress. If in this we have acted wisely, it will be set to our Credit in opposition to some of our supposed errors. I have the honour to be, Noble Sir &c &c.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> These letters are in Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:183-87, 195-97, 209-11, 213-17.

<sup>2</sup> In this letter Lafayette had deplored congressional factionalism and defended Washington against his critics.

<sup>3</sup> See Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:196, 227-28.

## Henry Laurens to Robert and Samuel Purviance, Jr.

Gentlemen,

York Town 12 Jany 1778.

I had the honour of receiving & reporting your Letter of the 10th to Congress this Morning. It is referred to the Marine Committee from whence you will receive a proper reply I hope by return of the Post.<sup>1</sup>

Congress having received information by divers means of the arrival of the Cargo of Salt intimated in your Letter abovementioned, framed the Inclosed Act of the present date for securing if possible the whole for the use of the Army for which it is wanted in the extremest degree. As some days may elapse before the Governor & Council can act, I am directed to transmit the Copy inclosed as abovementioned to you & to request you to exert your endeavours to prevent a Sale or removal of the Salt until His Excellency shall give directions in consequence of the present recommendation & Resolve. The term "secure" in the latter part of the Resolve, you may be assured comprehends the Idea of purchasing, & I have so explained it to the Governor.

It is expected that every freind to these States in your Town will give you all needful assistance to serve the Public in this momentous business; without Salt it will be impossible to lay up Magazines of Provision for the Army & I need not predict what will be the consequence of deficiency. I am with great respect, Gentlemen, Your obedient humble servt,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (MdHi). Addressed: "Samuel & Robt. Purviance Esquires, Agents for the United States at Baltimore." Endorsed: "Ansd. per T Plunket."

<sup>1</sup> See Marine Committee to Robert and Samuel Purviance, January 20, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to William Shippen, Jr.

Sir,

12th Jany 1777 [*i.e.* 1778]

Give me leave to refer you to the inclosed Letter of the 7th Inst.<sup>1</sup> & to add that I shall forward with this a packet containing fifty Addresses to the Clergy severally, you will be pleased to Subjoin & superscribe the Names of such Reverend Gentlemen, as you know & can learn of, who are most likely to succeed in Charitable Collections for the Hospital & cause the Letters to be forwarded with all possible dispatch—it may be necessary for you to add a Postscript to each Letter directing where to send such Collections as may be made.

I give you this Trouble Sir, from an opinion that by your assistance the Resolve of Congress which we have now in view will be most certainly & speedily carried into effect & therefore I trust you will the more readily excuse me &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to Shippen, January 7, 1778.

## Robert Morris to William Bingham

*Manheim in Pennsylvania, Jany. 12th. 1778.* "I wrote you a few Lines the 19th Ulto.<sup>1</sup> & sent them by Captn. Bentsons Mate to go in the Schooner Hope for your address. Copy thereof goes with this. You will probably wonder at my long Silence since the loss of Philada. & I can only Apologize for it by telling you that the hurry & confusion occasioned by removing my Family, Books, Papers & effects took up a considerable deal of my time & the Attention I was obliged to pay to Publick Business employed all the rest. Untill within this last three Weeks that I have staid at home in consequence of Leave of Absence from Congress obtained in order to settle my own affairs which have been too much & too long neglected. I have been for a fortnight past employed in guarding against the Malconduct of Mr. T. M. which I was not fully informed of untill the 17th Ulto. & I then applied to Congress to have him dismissed their Service. I have dissolved the partnership of W, M Co[mpan]y because T[homas] W[illing] has remained in Philad. & T. Morris has behaved so Ill that I renounce all future Connection with him and accordingly have been writing Letters to stop his Credit with all our Friends in Europe &ca. I shall henceforward do business in my own Name & on my own Acct. but having brought with me the Compy. Books & papers it falls to my Share to Wind up the concerns of the House. Consequently I shall not want employment, however you will find me always ready to render you any Service in my power." Discusses in detail Bingham's

accounts, the status of several of their joint ventures, and steps he has recently taken to liquidate obligations involving Thomas Morris and Willing, Morris & Co. "Genl. Gates is just lighting at my Door, therefore shall conclude for the present."<sup>2</sup>

RC (DLC). In the hand of John Swanwick, with signature and postscript by Morris.

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> At the foot of this letter, which Swanwick designated "2d Copy," Morris appended the following postscript. "Manheim March 10th. 1778. I am just setting out for York and at present can only inform you that your orders for investing 40,000 Dollars in the Funds before the first of this Month did not reach me untill the 4th Inst. Previous thereto I had paid Messrs. Norton & Beall £4000 on your Acct and your draft in favor Mr. Rich Harrison for £1222.8.9 so that in fact you have not above £1000 this Money."

## Elbridge Gerry to George Washington

Dear sir

York 13th of Jany 1778

I have waited some Time, in Expectation of informing You with the Sense of Congress on the several Subjects mentioned in your agreeable Favour of the 25th Decr;<sup>1</sup> but am not yet fully able to answer my Purpose.

A Committee is appointed from Congress & the Board of War, who in Concert with your Excellency have full Powers to form & *execute* a Plan for reducing the Number of Batalions now in the Service; to recommend the necessary Appointments of General officers; to determine on the necessary Reinforcements for the Cavalry, Artillery, & Infantry, & report their opinions on the best Mode of obtaining the same; to remove from office any officers of the civil Departments of the Army for Negligence, Incompetency, or Fraud, & appoint others untill the Sense of Congress can be known; to report the necessary Alterations to be made in the Regulations of these Departments; to remove all just Causes of Complaint relative to rank, confining it as nearly as may be to the military Line; & for other purposes mentioned in their Commission. The Members are Messers Fulsum, Dana, General Reid, & Harvey from Congress; & Generals Gates & Mifflin & Colo. Pickering from the Board of War. I sincerely wish that Dispatch may be made in this Business, & that the first Thing may be to consider of the necessary Reinforcements, that Measures may be immediately pursued to obtain them, the mentioning of this is however unnecessary to your Excellency.<sup>2</sup>

The Resolutions for allowing hereafter to officers the Care of their Retained Rations, & for enabling your Excellency to increase the Number of Your Aids,<sup>3</sup> I find by your Letters to Congress are at Hand; & the proposals of allowing to officers who shall continue in



the Service to the End of the War & whose regiments shall then be reduced, half pay for a limited Time; of enabling officers after the War to sell their Commissions under proper Regulations; & of giving to the Widows of such officers as shall hereafter lose their Lives in the Service, pensions whilst they remain in a State of Widowhood, are now before Congress. The first has been largely debated, & I am apprehensive that it will meet with a negative;<sup>4</sup> there are many weighty Arguments against it, such as the Infant State of the Country, its Aversion to placemen & pensioners whereby G Britain is likely to loose her Liberty, the Equality of the Officers & Soldiers of some states before the War, & the bad Effect that such provision would have on the Minds of the latter; but I must confess that none of these weigh so much on my Mind, as the Necessity of making a Commission so valuable that a Dismission will not only be disgraceful to an officer, but injurious to his Interest. This will introduce that Subordination to civil Authority which is necessary to produce an internal Security to Liberty; And to the high Officers of the military Departments such authority as to enable them to establish Discipline, without which an Army can be neither vigorous nor successful.

Colo. Wilkinson is appointed Secretary to the Board of War which I hope he will accept, that the just Causes of complaint arising from his hasty promotion may be removed.<sup>5</sup> Should he refuse, I think Congress will be justified in taking effective Measures to remedy the evils resulting therefrom.

General Heath is directed to procure & send to your Excellency one thousand bell Tents, to prevent in future the Danger arising from heavy Rains at the critical Moment of an Engagement with the Enemy.<sup>6</sup> Is it not necessary that Measures should be taken by Congress or your Excellency for further providing against this Evil, by appropriating a Drummer, Fife, or some other officer in each company to carry a Bell Tent for the same, in Times of Action when the Baggage Waggons are ordered to leave the Army: that whether advancing or retreating the Soldiers may never be in Danger of having their Muskets & Ammunition rendered useless from the want of this Article?

I remain Sir in Haste, but with much Esteem & Respect, your Excellency's very humble Serv.

E. Gerry

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's December 25 letter to Gerry requesting a committee of Congress to confer with him and seeking half pay for officers for life is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:200-201.

<sup>2</sup> Unable to solve the problems of army organization and supply raised by Washington and studied by the committee of Congress at headquarters at Whitemarsh early in December, Congress decided on January 10 to appoint a second committee to conduct an on-site inquiry at camp, recently relocated at Valley Forge. Francis Dana, Joseph Reed, Nathaniel Folsom, and John Harvie were named to the committee from Congress and Horatio Gates, Thomas

Mifflin, and Timothy Pickering were added to it from the Board of War. The committee, which was to be concerned with "the abuses which have too long prevailed in the different departments belonging to the army," was directed to "form and execute a plan for reducing the number of regiments in the continental service" and "to adopt such other measures as they shall judge necessary for introducing economy and promoting discipline and good morals in the army." See *JCC*, 10:39-41; and the Committee at Camp's Minutes of Proceedings, January 28-31, 1778, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> On January 3, Congress authorized Washington to increase the number of his aides. See *JCC*, 10:15. New regulations concerning rations had been passed on December 30. *JCC*, 9:1068.

<sup>4</sup> The questions of half-pay for officers, widows' pensions, and the sale of officers' commissions were brought before Congress in a committee report on January 5. They were debated in committee of the whole on January 9 and 10, but the delegates remained so divided over the issues raised it was deemed advisable to refer them to the new committee appointed to go to camp. See *JCC*, 10:19-20, 37, 39; and Committee at Headquarters to George Washington, December 10, 1777.

<sup>5</sup> For further information on the appointment of James Wilkinson, see Nathaniel Folsom to Josiah Bartlett, January 2, 1778, note 2.

<sup>6</sup> See *JCC*, 10:20, 24.

## Henry Laurens to the Delegates

Tuesday Morning 6 oClock. 13th Jany 1778

Congress having immediately before them much urgent & important business which demands instant dispatch & there being now a considerable addition by Letters received last Night after adjournment,

The President presents his most respectful Compliments to the Members respectively & earnestly requests & recommends an early attendance at the House this Morning.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

Janry. 13th. 1778

First & foremost, become a reconciling advocate for me with your dear lovely Portia, who, from the most rational tender attachment to you, is as angry with me as her judiciously patriotic Spirit will allow, upon a foundation which I hope you have been acquainted with, long e'er this day.

This hint must pass for an acknowledgement of the rect. of her letter of Decr. 19th and for all the answer which I have the courage to make.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Thaxter must supply for my only mentioning that your favour of the 9th Ult. is in my pocket.

By consulting my Scrawls to Mr. Hancock<sup>2</sup> & to Mr. S. Adams, you will see why I seem so stingy of ink just now, who have appeared a prodigal in your eye not long since; when you have seen me spoiling whole quires of virgin paper with that black and mischievous Liquor.

As a Supplement to what I have Sketched to Mr. S—— A—— I give you a Specimen of the *agitating* Genius of the *Men of Leisure* on the Banks of Schuylkill. They have offered 13 quarto pages of hints & observations to Genl W. for his concurrence and conveyance to Congress.<sup>3</sup> The *spirit* of those pages is contained in the following Analysis made by Secretary Thompson who was kept very near the *Letter*. You will perceive a roguish sneer in the preface & conclusion, but it is what no whig Farmer could avoid.

For an honest Clue take the word *recommend* instead of *make* Lt. Generals &c &c.

A short & easy method of promoting the interest of America, of increasing her internal strength & her reputation with foreign powers.

1 Let all colonial distinctions be done away.

2 Let each state send to head quarters a proportional number of men to compose an army of 60,000 foot, 6,000 Artillery and 8,000 horse, besides artificers &c.

3 Let the Commander in chief & 6 officers whom he shall be pleased to make Lt. Generals model & officer this army as they please, and, that those whom *they* dislike may not be much disgusted by being turned out of service, let them have lands assigned, by Congress; and, if the Chief & his 6 Lieut. Genls. think proper to give them a letter of recommendation, let them have a pension for life equal to one half of their present pay.

4 To attach officers to the service let them hold their commissions for life, with liberty to sell out, when the commander in chief pleases, and let them have half pay, if the army is reduced.

5 To establish a due subordination let none be promoted out of turn but such as the Chief & his 6 Lt. Generals please.

6 Let all above the rank of Coll. be dignified with and after the war have pensions suitable to their rank.

This done, Order & Regularity & Discipline will immediately take place. Every soldier will be clean & neatly dressed, his head combed & powdered; Sloth, Desertion & Disease will be banished the camp of the American army; nay, what is more, they will be well fed and their meat will be boiled instead of fried or broiled.

I have a private letter from Doctr. Franklin of Octr. 7th by which I find he and I are fully together in Sentiment as to Applications of foreign Officers for employ here so that my labours will be diminished in future.<sup>4</sup>

Our Commissions & Instructions to W—— L—— & R—— I——<sup>5</sup> got to hand the beginning of Octr. You will know the rest from Mr.



Hancock as I have not time to tell the roguish Story to all my Colleagues. The public papers were stolen either in Fr. or in Amer. or sold by the bearer.

Genl. W—— informs me that the Journals are found, upon my Directions, near the Gulph, and shall be forwarded directly;<sup>6</sup> The 3d Vol. will immediately be set on foot after finishing the 2d by printing the month of Decr. 1776.

I shall only say on this half Sheet that I am Your most affectionate  
humble Servant, Js Lovell

[P.S.] I mistake I must go further or break a much more important promise. I must apologize to you and to the other Gentlemen thro' you for our Brother Geary's seeming Negligence of Friendship, by telling you that it is not in his power to write without neglecting to answer public Letters recd. as a Committee Chairman.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> In a letter, which the editors of the *Adams Family Correspondence* dated ca. December 15, 1777, Abigail Adams had berated James Lovell for contriving to remove John Adams from home by sending him as an American commissioner to France. See Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:370–71.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> In his letter this day to Samuel Adams, Lovell wrote at length on the army officers' demands for half-pay for life and authorization to sell their commissions. Following the committee of Congress' visit to headquarters at Whitmarsh early in December, several unidentified army officers apparently prepared the "hints & observations" for Washington referred to here by Lovell. No copy of the report to Washington has been found, but it apparently contributed to Congress' decision to send another committee to camp to help restore morale to the army. Washington may well have incorporated much of the officers' petition in his lengthy January 28, 1778, recommendations to the committee at camp, which have been printed in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:362–403.

<sup>4</sup> Lovell enclosed Benjamin Franklin's October 7 letter to Lovell in his next letter to Adams. See Lovell to John Adams, January 20, 1778, note 3.

<sup>5</sup> That is, William Lee and Ralph Izard.

<sup>6</sup> For further information on Lovell's efforts to recover the buried printed journals of Congress, see Lovell to George Washington, December 31, 1777.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir

Janry. 13th. 1777 [*i.e.* 1778]

I prevented Congress some time ago from inserting Massachusetts among those states to whom pressing recommendation has been sent to afford more members to transact the business for which is great & various here at this period; but I find reason to repent my interposition, tho', otherwise, you would have been summoned back immediately upon getting out of your Saddle in Boston.

When 5 were actually at York, 2 Delegates were a Representation;

now only 3 are here, 3 are essential in Congress. This, at the worst season of the year, to 3 shabby constitutions is irksome; more especially as each is on 2 standing committees, and according to the usual fate of eastern members are seldom forgot upon perplexing transient calls. Mr. Dana goes to Camp, with three others of Congress and 3<sup>1</sup> of the new Board of War, upon the great Business of introducing Discipline & Economy into the army. Poor Geary will get a double portion of Treasury-toil by this, which upon the back of a great deal of System-Patching lately, will go near to put him past the salutary power of Vegetables.

But, I must say more about the same Delegation. It is expected that 5 shall attend together the Duties of the Appointment. When shall I snatch a few dear domestic Joys? Not till the four now absent shall *chuse* to quit *their* genial BOARDS. I say the 4, because the BACHELOR has a right to return & enjoy his BED near Salem, before I prove I can pick a Bone at my own TABLE in Boston.

We have wanted 2 of our Colleagues lately as *Mentors*;<sup>2</sup> tho' we should not, even with them, have been quite unanimous. *Just* cause, ground or *reason to fear* that a contract made will be violated warrants a suspension of the agreement, till that fear is done away; but, that *just* cause must be something *consequent* to the Convention; and the degree of fear arising from the same word or deed will operate variously according the characters of persons & circumstances of things. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, if a great variety of Judgements should be formed in the world upon the late decision of Congress. Those who have been chiefly theoretic students will shake their heads and cry nay. These will be joined by some timorous christians who are always doubting even when they say they have *sure* hope. On the other hand practical Politicians joined by all such good Folk as, supposing themselves past the days of miraculous Exhibition, look upon natural vigorous exertions as somewhat connected with the essence of Hope, these, I suppose, will cry aloud aye. G—— & I are in the latter Classes. Brother D——<sup>3</sup> tho not fully with us was *honestly* & *judgematically* differing, as far as he did differ. I suspect the two Mentors if here would not have been *quite* in Unison.

But there has been another particular Case in which I think I should have had you both on my part, tho I have stood single against two worthy patriotic Brethren.

You must have observed in some of my past Scrawls that there was an appearance of a wish or design to put our military officers upon the footing of European. "To put them on Half pay after the end of this War either for Life or 20 or 10 or 5 years, to secure Pensions to their Widows, and to make their commissions vendible." In my rage against Extortioners I have thrown out these things in the Course of my Correspondence but not so much to frighten *them* into

an amendment of manners, as to draw reproof to myself from *old veterans*, as Clark calls one of my Friends, and from any others who have not forgotten that this *was* in its beginning a *patriotic* war.

Are we not in a young country where a living is easily gotten by labour and where it is not a disgrace to work? so that Officers after the War may with ease and without shame maintain themselves upon land which is to be given to them as well as to soldiers.

Are not our soldiers, many of them, married Men as well as their Commanders? In Europe they are single, or if married, they have wives like themselves without any home. Let this equality in America be considered, and say whether the soldier's Widow shall not have a Pension, and the soldier surviving the War be put on Half pay.

Are not Militia Officers almost as much in the Field as our Continental Gentlemen? Must we not enlarge the half pay Scheme or disgust the Militia? a Case of the Kind not happening in Europe. There, this mode of introducing into Society a set of haughty, idle, imperious Scandalizers of Industrious Citizens & Farmers may be practiced. I have no reason to look for a Half pay majority in Congress; As there is really no argument for it but a fear of all our *best* officers leaving the army. Here my spirit catches fire; but, the consequence shall not be the filling of a *whole sheet of paper* with Remarks & Anathemas. I will not foreclose my expectations from you.

I must go back to my first Subject as an apology for not writing the history of York Town at large.

Folsom, Dana, Reed, Harvey go to Camp. Pen to the Hospitals. Therefore the 13 States have their Business managed by a *snug* set indeed.

N. Hampshire	1
Massachusetts	2 no vote
Rh. Island	1
Connecticut	1
N York	2
N Jersey	2
Pensylvania	4
Delaware	_____
Maryland	_____
Virginia	1 no vote
North Carolina	1
Sth Carolina	1
Georgia	2

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18 Delegates—9 States

In writing to your Namesake, I write to you and vice versa. Mr. Hancock will also probably communicate to you some part of my letter to him,<sup>4</sup> I mean what respects Folger.



With frozen fingers but much warmth of friendly attachment to  
you at heart I am, Dear Sir, your Servant,  
J L

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Lovell noted in the margin: "Gates, Mifflin, Pickering."

<sup>2</sup> That is, John and Samuel Adams.

<sup>3</sup> A reference to Francis Dana's differences with Elbridge Gerry and Lovell.

<sup>4</sup> Not found.

## Marine Committee to Thomas Read

Sir <sup>1</sup>

January 13th 1778.

The present situation of the Frigate Washington of which you are Commander rendering it very uncertain at what time she may be brought into service, and the desire you have to be active in the service of your Country having induced you to take the Command of the Continental Brig Baltimore we now direct that you repair immediately to Baltimore where the said Brig. lies and as we intend that she shall be fitted out as a packet and under your direction you will without loss of time proceed upon the business and we trust your good judgment will direct the most frugal & beneficial way of manning that vessel. We have wrote to Mr. Jonathan Hudson to assist you in the execution of this business,<sup>2</sup> and as the Agents at Baltimore were formerly directed to supply him with any articles in their possession belonging to the public which might be suitable for fitting this Vessel, you will apply to him to know what has been done and what may be had from the Public Stores. We now authorize you to purchase any materials, Canon or Stores which may be wanted for fitting this Vessel and to engage on the best terms in your power a proper complement of men for manning her, but we recommend to you to observe the greatest frugality in all cases. Mr. Hudson will assist you, and we would have you advise with him in every matter—he will pay off Accounts which may arise in the course of the business.

We would have you get your officers from those already engaged in the service but at this time unemployed. When the Brig is ready to take on board a Cargo you will advise the Commercial Committee who will order her a lading and direct your voyage which you are to obey. The Public dispatches which it is intended you shall carry will also be sent down in due Time, and before you sail you must furnish this Committee with a Compleat inventory of every thing on board your vessel signed by yourself and officers together with a return of the men on board and the terms on which they are engaged. We are Sir, Your hble servants

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Read (1740–88), former commodore of the Pennsylvania navy and younger brother of former Delaware delegate George Read, was captain of the unfinished Continental frigate *Washington* that had been scuttled below Bordentown, N.J., in December 1777 to prevent her capture by the British. Read continued to command the brigantine *Baltimore* until he was appointed commander of the frigate *Bourbon* in September 1779. *DAB*.

<sup>2</sup> The committee's January 13 letter to Jonathan Hudson, requesting that he assist and advise Captain Read in outfitting the *Baltimore*, is in PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book, fol. 121, and Paullin, *Marine Committee Letters*, 1:192. For efforts to obtain cannon for the *Baltimore*, see Francis Lewis to Thomas Johnson, January 27, 1778.

## Eliphalet Dyer to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Sr Jany the 14th [1778]

Mr Davenport has been detained & the above letter with him long beyond my expectation, as has Majr. Spencer who has been here now more than a week with the representations from Genl Spencer to Congress of the State of the Enemy at Rhodisland their late Increase, & of the ships of War lately arrived & of the weakness of our Army & state of Defence in that quarter, applying for relief; and that the Troubles & burthens lying upon him are so great that he requests liberty to resign his office that the Command at Rhodisland may be Committed to some other, his resignation is accepted tho to Continue in Command till another General officer arrives to take his place.<sup>1</sup> Congress taking under Consideration the forces necessary to be kept up and raised from the New England States had before them the report of the Comtee. from the Several Eastern States att Springfield agreeing on the proportion of Each of the New England States for the Defense of the State of Rhodisland proposed adopting that plan as most Just & equitable being agreed by those States, but on Consideration of the present defenceless State of Connecticut, the Continental forces being drawn of so much from New York Department down this way, & the remainder as I have lately heard, ordered up to Fishkill, which leaves Connecticut open & exposed to the ravages of the Enemy, from Horseneck to Stonington, a large body of the Enemy at New York & probably by this time advanced parties up as far as Mamaroneck, our whole coast exposed daily to the Enemies Ships which must oblige the Connecticut to keep up a large force for their own defence, no help or assistance from Congress <sup>2</sup> or any particular State, Massachusetts & New Hampshire in no part Exposed to the Enemy at present, on which I concluded that Connecticut ought not to send any Troops to Rhodisland but that the other New England States ought to defend Rhodisland; & Insisted that Connecticut ought not to be called upon for any assistance that way; but all to no purpose. The New England States you may depend upon it were

all against me, Enforced by the agreement at Springfield; I, single, and alone from Connecticut, no one to assist or support me. I opposed & opposed but in Vain. Connecticut must take care of themselves & assist the other New England States with one Regiment in the defense of Rhodisland; was obliged to submit, tho in my opinion against reason & Justice & had only the satisfaction to fret & scold a little while after as usual & then submit with quietness to what I could not help or prevent. The determination of Congress to detain Genll Burgoyne &c I perceive has somehow now got abroad therefore to no purpose any longer to conceal it, it was only meant to keep it secret till the order for that purpose reached Boston that proper precautions might be taken on such an event. Have the honor to be Yours,

E Dyer

[P.S.] I have to add that one Mr Folger of Nantucket who has since he left that place been to London, from thence a voyage to the Falkland Isles & back to London, from thence as he says he went to France to get employed by our Agents there in the American service, he so far gained the confidence of Doctr Franklin & Mr Dean as to be Intrusted with a special Packet containing as we Imagine matters of great Importance. It was sent to him from Paris to Haver de Grace to his special care to Deliver to Congress. He landed att North Carolina, came to this place a few days agoe, delivered his Packet to the President & when it came to be opened nothing in it was founded, but 8 or ten sheets of clear blank paper done up packet wise. It appeared to have been opened the outside cover gone. He pleads his Innocence, says he has taken the utmost care of it never suffering it to be out of his hands or possession except a few minutes looked on by the Govr of North Carolina in his presence only to please him. He was Intrusted with a packet in order to procure a pass to York Town. He has been strictly examined and at present Committed to prison till the matter can be further enquired into.<sup>3</sup> He says it must have been taken out & the blank paper put in in its way from Paris to Havre as some packet before he says had been Interrupted in the same way. It is probable the original Inclosure is gone to the Ministry at London instead of coming to America and possibly may be of as much service in the whole as if it had come . . .<sup>4</sup> but at present we are very uneasy at the disappointment. There were several private packages most of which appeared to have been opened but no letter of consequence.<sup>5</sup> Arrived there is one for Mr. Barn. Dean which is forwarded to him.

E.D.

Tr (CtHi). A continuation of Dyer to Trumbull, January 5, 1778.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. Joseph Spencer's December 20, 1777, letter, which is in PCC, item 161, fols. 351-58, was read in Congress on January 7 and referred to the Board of War. On January 13 Congress approved the board's report, which included recommendations that the New England states immediately furnish troops



for the defense of Rhode Island according to the quotas established at Springfield and that General Spencer's resignation be accepted as soon as he was relieved by a suitable replacement. See *JCC*, 10:25, 46-47.

<sup>2</sup> At this point the copyist inserted above the line "or Continent."

<sup>3</sup> For details on the Folger affair, see Committee Examination of John Folger, January 12, 1778.

<sup>4</sup> Ellipsis in Tr.

<sup>5</sup> Dyer's concluding sentence was transcribed in the top margin of the sheet on which the copyist concluded the January 5 portion of this letter and began the January 14 continuation.

## William Ellery to Nicholas Cooke

Sir, York Town Jany. 14th. 1778.

Congress hath lately resolved, for reasons specified in their Resolution, to suspend the Embarkation of Genl. Burgoyne and the Troops under his Command; until the Convention of Saratoga shall be ratified by the Court of London and notified to Congress. This Circumstance, the Arrival in Newport Harbour of a number of Men of War, some of them of the line, and my Fears of our not being able to sustain an Attack made by the Troops at Rhode-Island joined by Marines and Seamen from those Men of War have made me anxious for the Town of Providence particularly; against which the Enemy would, in my opinion, bend their whole force if they should think there was any Probability of Success. Impressed with these anxious feelings I have represented the State of Rhode-Island to Congress in such a manner as to procure a Resolution recommending it to the States of N.H., M.B., R.I. and C. to immediately furnish and constantly keep up in the State of Rhode Island the Troops stipulated by the Committee which met at Springfield last July. The President will immediately transmit to you authentic Copies of the Resolutions hinted at, and also of other Resolutions enter'd into in Consequence of Genl. Spencer's Letter, whose Resignation Congress have accepted.

I am suspicious that the enemy will consider the suspension of the embarkation of General Burgoyne and his troops as an infraction of the convention, attempt to rescue those troops, and at the same time pour their resentment on our State. If these should be their Ideas it seems to me that Providence will be their object. Because when possessed of that town they might communicate by Spies with Burgoyne, a Day might be fixed by them for the latter to burst with his Troops through the Guards, and at the same time the Enemy might advance from Providence to meet and receive them. If the Assembly should not think this chimerical they will without doubt be on their guard, and make the best preparation they can to repell any Attempt that may be made upon our State. Apprehensions of an Attempt of

this kind have induced Congress to recommend it to the State of Massachusetts-Bay to increase the number of the Guards upon Burgoyne's Troops, and to the New-England states to furnish and keep up their Quotas of Men in the State of Rhode Island as before mentioned.<sup>1</sup>

The Provision made for the Payment of the Troops in that Quarter will prevent any demands on our Treasury in future. I hope that this Consideration, and the Question about the Payment of the Expence of the late inglorious Expedition not being yet decided, will induce our State to put off any Application they may have in contemplation to make to Congress as long as they can.

We have nothing new. Both Armies are very quiet. Heartily wishing that everything in our quarter may be so, until we shall be ready to make a vigorous Effort for the recovery of Rhode-Island, I continue to be with great Respect, Your Excellency's most obedt. hble Servant,

William Ellery

P.S. I have not had the honour of a letter from the Assembly since I have been here.

RC (R-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 10:42, 46.

## Elbridge Gerry to James Warren

[January 14, 1778]

Mr. Dana has been ordered by congress on a committee to camp. He will probably be absent a month. I am alone of our delegation, and the state will lose its vote.<sup>1</sup> It will be very injurious to the interests of the government to be in this situation, as will often be the case while the presence of three delegates is required to give a vote. I am worn down with fatigue, and have been waiting with some impatience to return to Massachusetts; but I have wished to see certain measures accomplished before I left congress; when those were finished, others presented themselves equally important and I waited for them, and so on; but this mode of travelling will never get me home. I must therefore determine at all events to leave this place in the spring.

MS not found; reprinted from extract in Austin, *Life of Gerry*, 1:274-75. It was apparently taken from Gerry's January 14, 1778, letter to James Warren. It was referred to in Warren's April 5, 1778, letter to Gerry, for which see Gardiner, *Warren-Gerry Correspondence*, p. 112.

<sup>1</sup> When Francis Dana went to camp, two Massachusetts delegates remained at York to attend Congress—Gerry and James Lovell. For further information on the failure of Massachusetts to keep the state represented, see Lovell to Samuel Adams, January 3 and 13, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to Archibald Campbell

Sir,

14th Jany 1778

Two days ago I had the honour of receiving your Letter of the 18th Ultó. which I presented immediately to Congress where it was committed to the Board of War. I have called upon the Board twice for a Report & it gives me concern to find they are not prepared—nevertheless I will not let the present opportunity pass without informing you of the receipt of your application, even this I can conceive will afford some satisfaction to a Gentleman in your unhappy circumstances & you may depend upon me for the earliest notice when Congress shall have come to a determination upon your Case.<sup>1</sup>

At present I beleive we wait to see proper returns made for many British Officers who have been permitted to go into New York & Philadelphia & particularly for Major General Prescott who is gone into the former City as a tender in Exchange for Major General Lee.

I have the honour to be with every Sentiment of respt.<sup>2</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Lieutt. Colo. Campbell of the 71st Regimt British, Boston."

<sup>1</sup> In his letter Lieutenant Colonel Campbell, a prisoner of war being held in Massachusetts, asked Congress' permission to go on parole to New York to arrange his exchange for Ethan Allen. PCC, item 78, 5:128. After Campbell's letter had first been referred to the Board of War and then to the committee at camp, Congress approved his proposal on March 30, 1778. See *JCC*, 10:43-44, 58, 295; and Committee of Camp Minutes of Proceedings, February 2-7, 1778, note 4.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter this day to Commissary of Prisoners Elias Boudinot to inform him of a January 14 resolve "ordaining your order to be a sufficient Voucher for the delivery of provisions for the use of prisoners of War." PCC, item 13, fol. 126; and *JCC*, 10:48.

## Henry Laurens to George Clinton

Sir,

York Town 14 Jany 1778

The last I troubled you with was under the 2d Inst. by Messenger Weir, since which I have been honoured by the receipt of Your Excellency's favour of the 20th Ultó.<sup>1</sup> This I immediately Reported to Congress but have received no commands which authorize me to make a particular reply. Business for some time past has not been dispatched in Congress with that degree of Celerity, nor, possibly in some Instances, accuracy, which the peculiar exigency of these Infant States demands, not owing to negligence & inattention of the few Members who now faithfully devote their time & drudge in the service of their Country but to a deficiency of numbers necessary for the discharge of the very important matters which every new day brings forth. There are at present no more than 21 Members on the floor. Of



these 3 are ordered on a Committee to General Washington's Camp, & 1 to visit the Hospitals & of late from some unaccountable delinquencies, Congress in order to guard against a total dispersion of the Army have been obliged to Act personally by several of its Members, Quarter Master general, Clothier General, Commissary general & as Your Excellency will conclude from the intimation just now dropped Director of Hospitals & I might with strict propriety add two or three et cætera. I have taken the Liberty of being so full on this head in order to shew Your Excellency the necessity for hastening a more ample Representation from the State of New York as well as to apologize for any unavoidable delay on the part of Congress & I have been urged more particularly to do so from a hint which Mr. Lewis gave me this Evening of his intention to leave us in a few days.<sup>2</sup>

Under the present Cover Your Excellency will receive a very solemn & important Act of Congress of the 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of Lieutt. General Burgoyne & his Troops until the Convention of Saratoga shall be distinctly & explicitly Ratified by the Court of Great Britain & properly Notified to Congress—a measure which Congress after long & dispassionate consideration judged to be equally justifiable & necessary & are therefore confident their Resolutions will be confirmed by the approbation of all their Constituents in these United States who are most immediately concerned, that the Justice & good Policy of the Act will be acknowledged by every disinterested Court in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

I have the honour to be, with perfect Esteem & Respect, sir, Your Excellency's Most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (MH-H).

<sup>1</sup> This letter, which was read in Congress on January 5, is in PCC, item 67, 2:94-95.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Lewis was granted an eight-day leave of absence on January 20. See JCC, 10:67.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens also sent word of this "Act of Congress" in brief letters that he wrote this day to Gov. William Livingston of New Jersey and to Presidents Meshech Weare of New Hampshire and Thomas Wharton of Pennsylvania. PCC, item 13, fols. 130-32.

## Henry Laurens to Peter Colt

Sir,

14th Jany 1778

I beg leave to refer you to the Inclosed Act of Congress of this date contained in the three Resolutions calculated for enabling you to proceed in the Duties of your Office with advantage to the public & satisfaction to your Self.<sup>1</sup>

The peculiar exigency of affairs at this critical juncture of time demands from every faithful friend & Servant of the public his most zealous exertions for the Interest & welfare of these Infant States. It is therefore the reasonable expectation of Congress, that the present Act will have the desired effect.

I am with great Respect &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Peter Colt Esquire, Dep. Comm. gen. of Purchases, New Haven. Per Js. Devanport."

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 10:50-51. The background of these resolves is discussed in Laurens to Ephraim Blaine, January 6, 1778, note 1.

## Henry Laurens to Nicholas Cooke

Sir, York Town 14th Jany 1778

Your Excellency's Letter dated in Council of War 8th November did not reach me till the 31st December. I immediately Reported to Congress & the Contents have been duly considered.<sup>1</sup>

I have in charge to transmit you an Act of Congress of the 13th Inst. recommending to the Eastern States to keep up the Army stationed for the defence of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations, & for divers other purposes which Congress hope will prove beneficial to the State. Your Excellency will receive the Act under cover with this & to which I beg leave to refer. Congress are in no doubt but that from the quantity of Clothing which has lately been imported into Massachuset & New Hamshire you have made the necessary provision for your Continental Battalions.

Your Excellency will also find inclosed a very solemn & important Act of Congress dated 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of Lieutt.-Gen. Burgoyne & his Troops until the Convention of Saratoga shall be distinctly & explicitly Ratified by the Court of Great Britain & properly notified to Congress. A measure which Congress hold to be equally justifiable & necessary & are therefore confident their Resolutions will be confirmed by the approbation of all their Constituents in these United States & that the Justice & good policy of the Act will be acknowledged by every disinterested Court in Europe. I have the honour to be with great regard, Sir, Your obedt. & humble servt,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (R-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to Cooke, January 3, 1778, note.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir,

14th Jany 1778.

Inclosed under the present cover you will receive an Act of Congress of the 12th Inst. appointing you one of a Committee from the Board of War to join a Committee of three Members of Congress & proceed to Camp. The Members from Congress are Mr. Dana, Mr. Folsom & Mr. Harvie, these Gentlemen intend to call on you at Reading & I hope will enter upon their journey today.<sup>1</sup>

With the last dispatches which I had the honour of receiving from you came a packet directed to Brig. Wilkinson who being now called upon to attend as Secretary to the Board of War will probably see you before he arrives at York. I judge it best therefore to pass the Packet through your hands & it will accordingly accompany this, as will another from General Washington directed to your Self. I have the honour to be with great respect.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Major General Gates, Reading."

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also wrote similar letters this day to two other members of the Board of War, Maj. Gen. Thomas Mifflin at Reading and Col. Timothy Pickering at Valley Forge, informing them of their appointment to this committee. PCC, item 13, fols. 122-23.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir,

York Town 14 January 1778.

My last to you was dated the 5th Inst. & sent by Messenger Weir—since which I have been honoured by yours of the 17th & 25th December—both of which having been committed to the Board of War & Board of Treasury are by one or other so far mislaid as to deprive me by the present opportunity of means for giving any reply except such as may be found in the Act of Congress of this date directing the Issuing of Salted provision & restricting you in making advances of Money to the Officers in the Commissary, Quarter Master & Clothier generals departments, to Cases of absolute necessity only—which Act you will find under this Cover—as you will an Act of the 6th directing that One Thousand good Bell Tents be sent to the Army under General Washington's Command.<sup>1</sup>

You will likewise receive two Copies of an Act of Congress dated the 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of Lieutt. General Burgoyne & his Troops until the Convention of Saratoga shall be explicitly ratified by the Court of Great Britain & notified to Congress. One Copy of which you are directed by another Act dated the 12th which will accompany the abovementioned to deliver to Lieutt. General Burgoyne; by the same Act you are enjoined to order such



Transports if arrived, or when they shall arrive, to quit the Port of Boston immediately.

Congress have directed General Washington to renew his demand on General Sir Wm. Howe for Passports for Vessels to transport Provision & Fuel for General Burgoyne's Army,<sup>2</sup> but as good Policy dictates that we should keep the Court of Great Britain from a knowledge founded upon authentic accounts of the Act of Congress of the 8th Inst. as long as we can fairly do so, that demand will not be made until Congress shall be informed that you have delivered a Copy of the Act to General Burgoyne. The transporting Provision under such expected Passports, admitting such will be granted, may therefore be long delayed; from these considerations you will judge Sir, of the expediency or necessity for applying to General Burgoyne to order Provision for the use of his Troops from on board the British Transport Vessels which probably from motives of œconomy he will interpose, for it is not intended he shall ever depart until he shall have paid up all his Accounts in terms of a Resolve of Congress lately transmitted you.

I have the honour to be, With very great regard, Sir, Your obedient & most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

P.S. Under your Cover I take the liberty of putting two Packets directed to the Baron Stuben & one to Lieutt. Colo. Campbell recommended to your protection. The Baron has not applied to Congress for any assistance to bring him forward on his Journey—possibly he might have expected the offer on our part as a thing of course, therefore I request you Sir to make him a tender of Money & to afford him such aids as shall be suitable to his Rank & occasions. This I think consistent with the honour of Congress & have no doubt, of their approbation but 'tis now past Midnight, the Messenger will take his dispatches by the dawn of tomorrow, therefore I shall not have time to apply for a formal Resolution for the purpose, but I will be answerable for such disbursements as you shall judge necessary & proper & repay them with thanks in such manner as you shall direct.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> General Heath's letters are in PCC, item 157, fols. 57-64.

<sup>2</sup> See JCC, 10:45.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear son

York Town 14th Jany. 1778

This will be delivered to you by Monsr. le Chevalier Lanuville a Gentleman who at a very great expence is come to offer his service

in our Army, you will learn from himself in a very few words, his pretensions & expectations & in further conversation I believe you will find him to be a Man of great Military talents.

He anxiously wishes for a Yes or a No—to his applications to Congress, this is his own Language—but as he had determined to go to Camp, where the Committee of conference to whom all power for the present is given, it was judged best to defer an answer until their return. If you can with propriety introduce him to some of those Gentlemen—I know you will shew him every civility that circumstances will admit of.<sup>1</sup> Tell me your thoughts on our determination to suspend the embarkation of Mr. Burgoyne. I am not answerable for nor do I claim the merit of the manner in which the thing is ushered into the World, 'tis plain & simple not free from exceptions I know. All *that* was done while I sat in the Chair & is mere fringe & Lace from an infant manufactory—but for the thing itself, the propriety, the justice & the sound Policy I contended in the Committee of the whole—so well was I persuaded of the rectitude of the Act, I declared I would rather lose my whole Estate, than hear a majority of dissenting Voices. The grand Resolve passed Nemine Con.

This great determination will have its effect in Europe, in England more especially, whether good or Evil time will inform us. I feel strongly confirmed, that the Act is good & therefore entertain no alarming apprehensions. I pray God protect you.

Henry Laurens

[P.S.] You have seen a Letter said to be Your General's to his Lady published in Humphrys's Paper. Is not it in the whole or partly spurious?<sup>2</sup> The Express will deliver you a Packet containing a Comb & Pomatum.

RC (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> See also Laurens to the chevalier de La Neuville, January 27, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to one of a series of forged Washington letters that appeared in a number of loyalist newspapers and purported to show that he was a reluctant supporter of independence. Worthington C. Ford, *The Spurious Letters Attributed to Washington* (Brooklyn: Privately printed, 1889).

## Henry Laurens to the Massachusetts Board of War

Gentlemen,

14th Jany 1778.

Inclosed you will receive an Act of Congress requesting you to import 15000 Barrels of flour or in case of deficiency to Import Rice equal in quantity to such deficiency & empowering you to Charter Vessels for that purpose to which I beg leave to refer you. You will

also find here inclosed a Warrant on the Continental Loan Office Massachuset's Bay for 50000 Dollars remitted in obedience to the order contained in the said Act.<sup>1</sup>

I am, Gentlemen, Your most obedt. Servt.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 10:48-49. The Massachusetts Board of War's February 4 response to this letter is in PCC, item 147, 1:491-94.

## Henry Laurens to the Massachusetts Council

Honorable Gentlemen.

York Town 14th January 1778

Under the present Cover you will be pleased to receive for the State of Massachuset Bay a solemn & very important Act of Congress passed on the 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of Lieutt. General Burgoyne & his Troops until the Convention of Saratoga shall be explicitly Ratified by the Court of Great Britain & properly notified to Congress. This measure after long & dispassionate consideration was adopted by Congress as an indispensable duty, equally justifiable & necessary, hence we rest satisfied that these Resolutions will be confirmed by the approbation of all our Constituents in these United States who are most nearly concerned, & we are as strongly persuaded that the Justice & good Policy of the Act will be acknowledged by every disinterested Court in Europe.

You will likewise find inclosed an Act of Congress of the 12th Inst. requesting you to afford General Heath a necessary Guard over the Troops abovementioned And Also, an Act of the 13th for keeping up the Army stationed for the defence of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations & for divers others purposes therein recited. To which several Acts I beg leave to refer you.

I am, with all possible Respect, Honorable Gentlemen, Your obedient & most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (M-Ar).

## Henry Laurens to Joseph Spencer

Sir,

14 Jany 1778

Inclosed you will receive & to which I beg leave to refer you, An Act of Congress of yesterdays date, accepting your Resignation for the reasons offered in your Letter of the 20th Ultio. when you are properly releived by an Officer to be immediately ordered for that



purpose—for keeping up the Army at present under your Command & for other purposes relative to the Said Army.<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to be with great R——

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Major General Spencer, Providence."

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also wrote another letter this day addressed to "Major General Spencer or the Commanding Officer of the Army stationed near Providence" in which he sent news of "an Act of Congress of the present date for the more regular payment of the Army Stationed for the defence of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations & for appointing an Assistant to the Dep. Pay Master of the Eastern Department for that purpose." PCC, item 13, fol. 125. Laurens also sent word of this "Act of Congress" in a brief letter that he wrote this day to Ebenezer Hancock, the deputy paymaster general in the eastern department. *Ibid.*, fol. 131.

## Henry Laurens to Baron von Steuben

Sir<sup>1</sup>

14th Jany 1778

Two days ago I was honoured by the receipt of your favor of the 6th December to Congress, which I immediately presented, & this day the House Resolved an Act, Voting you the thanks of these United States for your Zeal & disinterested tender of Service in the Cause of America & requesting you to join General Washington as soon as you can make it convenient to your Self. I have the honour of transmitting the said Act under the present Cover, to which I beg leave to refer.

His Excellency General Washington who is encamped at Valley forge will be apprized of Your Excellency's intention to join him. I am persuaded it will afford the General great pleasure to meet Your Excellency with the best reception his circumstances & situation will admit of, which I apprehend Sir, will be only tolerable in your soldierly character. The General I am informed lives himself in a Hut, that is a little temporary Cabin such as are inhabited by the poorest Boors. As you will find Sir, the manner in which he fares in Bed & Board testifies a much more ardent Love for his Country than for Ease & Indulgence.

I have the honour to be &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Ludolf Gerhard Augustin, baron von Steuben (1730–94), a former Prussian general staff officer, joined the Continental Army as a volunteer in February 1778 and soon became its celebrated inspector general. *DAB*.

## Henry Laurens to Baron von Steuben

Sir, York Town 14th January 1778

I beg leave to refer Your Excellency to an Official Letter which I had the honour of addressing to you under the present date.

Permit me to add Sir, that you may command my best services upon every occasion. I have written to Major General Heath to make Your Excellency a tender of Money for travelling charges & requested him to afford you every assistance for your journey to General Washington's Camp. No doubt, you have discerned before this time that such Gold & Silver as you may have remaining, will be better kept in the Purse than disposed of in Current expences, for which our Paper Money is a proper substitute.

Believe me to be with very great Regard & Esteem, Sir, Your Excellency's Most obedient & most humble servant,

Henry Laurens

RC (MnHi). Addressed: "His Excellency Lieutt. General Baron Stuben, Boston."

## Henry Laurens to Jonathan Trumbull, Sr.

Sir, 14th Jany 1778.

My last was under the 5th Inst. by the hand of Messenger Weire.

I shall inclose with this a very solemn & important Act of Congress of the 8th Inst for suspending the embarkation of Lt. General Burgoyne & his Troops until the Convention of Saratoga shall be distinctly & explicitly ratified by the Court of Great Britain & properly notified to Congress, a measure which Congress judged to be equally justifiable & necessary, and are therefore confident their Resolutions will be confirmed by the approbation of all their Constituents in these United States & that the justice & good Policy of the Act will be acknowledged by every disinterested Court in Europe.

Your Excellency will likewise find inclosed an Act of Congress of yesterdays date for keeping up the Army for the defence of the State of Rhode Island & Providence Plantations & for divers other purposes.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also wrote brief letters this day to Governor Trumbull's son Jonathan, the deputy paymaster general in the northern department, and to William Palfrey, the paymaster general, notifying them of some January 13 resolves pertaining to their department. PCC, item 13, fol. 123; and JCC, 10:45-46.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir

14th Jan'y 1778.

Since the date of my last the 5th Inst. I have been honoured by the receipt of Your Excellency's several Letters of the 2d, 4th, 5th & 9th all which together with Copy of a Letter to Major General Gates have been in course reported to Congress.<sup>1</sup> A Sealed packet under Your Excellency's direction to General Gates, I forwarded to day to Reading where I expect it will meet the General.

Your Excellency will find in the present Cover the under-mentioned Acts of Congress.

of the 8th Inst. Report of a Committee on the Convention of Saratoga, confirmed by Resolves of Congress, for suspending the embarkation of Lt. General Burgoyne & his Troops.

6th. Directing General Heath to order 1000 Bell Tents to be sent to the Army under Your Excellency's Command.

13th. For repeating the requisition to General Sr. Wm. Howe for passports for Vessels to transport Fuel & provision to Boston for the subsistence of General Burgoyne's Army &ca.

10th. For appointing a Committee of four Members of Congress & three Members of the Board of War, to concert with Your Excellency measures for the benefit of the Army &ca.

14th. Accepting the offers of service by Baron Stuben as a Volunteer in Your Excellency's Army & inviting him to repair to Head Quarters.

I likewise inclose Copy of a Letter from Baron Stuben to Congress together with Copies of three Letters recommendatory, in favour of that Officer.

The injunction of secrecy on the proceedings of Congress upon the Convention of Saratoga, is understood to be taken off, by an order for transmitting the report of the Committee & subsequent Resolves to the Several States & one Copy through General Heath to General Burgoyne. I find also the Subject is no longer treated with reserve.

In Consequence of your Excellency's recommendation of Majr. Clarke, Congress appointed him the 10th Inst. one of the Auditors of public Accounts in the Camp which I hope will be acceptable to him.

I have the honour to be with the most respectful attachment &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup>These letters are in PCC, item 152, 5:237-38, 245-46, 249, 255-61, 267-68, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:249-50, 265, 267-68, 286-88.



## Abraham Clark to William Alexander

My Lord,

York Town Jany. 15. 1778

Your favours of Decr. ——— & Jany 3d but lately came to hand. The want of provisions in the Army gives me great concern. Complaints of this kind are frequent. This deficiency arises in part from a defect in the System, but much more from the indolence, Ignorance, disaffection or avarice of the Commissaries. Measures are frequently taken to remedy the Evils, but all hitherto have proved ineffectual, and will I believe continue to do so untill a reform is made in the department, which is now under consideration of a Committee.<sup>1</sup>

On Sunday evening a person with dispatches from France Arrived in this Town, but upon opening the Packet to our great Surprise we found little more than blank papers; every Letter of importance had been taken out, and their places Supplied by clean paper. Some few Letters on Commerce remained but not one Containing any intelligence—how or where this villany was effected is hard to determine. The bearer recd. the dispatches at Nantz with a Letter of directions from our Commissioners, which Letter he produced. He says the Packet was longer on its way from Paris than usual and he Supposes the Letters were taken out before he recd. it, as measures of that kind had been practised before; he gives but a poor Acct. of his proceedings—Acknowledges he had opened several of the bundles to see if no instructions were inclosed for him. He is ordered to be confined till the affair can be enquired into.

Your Lordship mentions the want of *Military merrit* in a Gentleman lately promoted;<sup>2</sup> I always before heard him mentioned as having great Military Abilities, and this was all I had ever heard concerning him. The kind of Correspondence he carried on with General G——<sup>3</sup> was not known at the Time of his promotion. His Letters to General Washington is of late date.<sup>4</sup> Was the business now to be done Congress would probably Act otherwise. A dissention among the principle Officers of the Army must be very injurious to the Publick interest. I can't say what Congress will do; by the Letters sent them An Appeal seems to be made, which I trust will be carefully attended to. The Authority & Credit of the Commander in Chief must be Supported.

Upon such a disagreeable Subject as contained in Genl. Gates Letter to General Washington,<sup>5</sup> I recd some Consolation at finding the offense so highly complained of fall (as it must fall somewhere) upon a person for whom General Gate's unbounded friendship and earnest solicitation had procured a promotion very injurious & disgusting to the Army. I was not in Congress at that Time, but think the measure injudicious. To remedy this hasty Step, Congress lately took Mr. W—— from the Military line by appointing him Secretary to

the board of War of which Mr Gates is President;<sup>6</sup> what will be done with him next I can't say. If he betrayed the Confidence of his Patron he may do the same by his Country,<sup>7</sup> and from the Opinion Mr Gates seems to have of such a Character, I think he will not hereafter chuse to have him near his person.

As General Burgoine & his forces are to be detained untill the Convention of Saratoga is rattified by the Court of London, and as there are now a Considerable force of the Enemy at Rhode Island with a large Number of Kings Ships, it becomes necessary to keep up a respectable force at Boston & near Rhode Island, And as General Spencer is dismissed agreeable to his application, some General will soon be appointed to take the Command in his place.

As the British Ministry have found means to Obtain the Letters for some time past, sent from our Commissioners at Paris, we remain ignorant of what is doing there; from the intelligence our Enemies get that way I am persuaded they are much Alarmed, for tho' they mayn't find the French determined on a War they will find them doing every thing else for us in their power.

Your Lordship no doubt hath heard of the Arrival of Barron Stuben at Boston. He is Lieut Genl., Quarter Master Genl. and Aid de camp to the King of Prusia; he is coming to Visit the Army, he Asks nothing but to serve as a Voluntier, he came without any Contract and does not propose to enter into any with us. I consider him as sent by his master to gain a true information of the Strength & Commerce of this Country, and withal to lend us the aid of his Military Abilities.

As the Reduction of the battalions is become necessary, a Committee of Congress with three of the board of war are going to the Army for that purpose. It is said many good officers are weary of the Service and wish to Resign unless they are placed upon a permanent establishment. That they Are weary & wish for ease I don't wonder, but who are there engaged either in Civil or military departments but are weary and wish for retirement of the Service they are engaged in would Admit? The service in every part is Severe. The Militia in some parts are half their Time out, the Legislatures spend much of their Time & Substance; Congress Set day & Night taking little Rest. Must we all therefore Resign? This is no Time to talk of Ease & retirement, let us first establish our Liberties, our desires of ease will then be Obtained. I do not mention this as applicable to your Lordship. I never heard of your desire to turn your back upon a service the most noble & Glorious. Some however do it. We all engaged I hope upon Patriotick Principles. May the same Seperate from every Lucrative and Ambitious view, carry us through this Contest. I am, My Lord, Your Lordship's Obedt. & Humble Servt.

Abra. Clark

RC (NHi).

<sup>1</sup> On January 14 Congress appointed Clark, Elbridge Gerry, and Jonathan

Bayard Smith a committee to investigate "the commissariate system" and "report such alterations therein as they shall deem best calculated to answer the end of the institution." See *JCC*, 10:51. See also *JCC*, 10:192-93, 207, 235, 241, 247-48.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to Gen. Thomas Conway's December 13 promotion to major general and appointment as inspector general of the Continental Army, which antagonized Washington and his supporters, who viewed Conway as an active opponent of the commander in chief. See *JCC*, 9:1026; and James Lovell to Horatio Gates, November 27, 1777, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> Horatio Gates.

<sup>4</sup> For the letters in question, see Henry Laurens to John Laurens, January 8, 1778, note 3.

<sup>5</sup> In his December 8 letter to Washington, Gates asked for assistance in discovering the identity of the person who had revealed to Washington the criticism of him contained in a private letter from General Conway to Gates. Gates sent a copy of his letter to Washington to President Laurens soon after it was written, but there is no evidence that Laurens read it to Congress. *PCC*, item 154, 1:316-17. Washington wrote to Gates on January 4 informing him that James Wilkinson, one of Gates' own aides, had disclosed Conway's remarks to Gen. William Alexander, who in turn apprised Washington of them. On the same day Washington also wrote to President Laurens enclosing copies of his January 4 letter to Gates and Gates' December 8 letter to him. Congress read all these on January 13 but erased the record of it from the journals. See *JCC*, 10:43; and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:263-65.

<sup>6</sup> James Wilkinson had been appointed secretary to the Board of War on January 6. *JCC*, 10:21, 24.

<sup>7</sup> This was a remarkable prophecy in view of Wilkinson's later career as a Spanish agent and sometime participant in the 1806 Aaron Burr "Conspiracy." *DAB*.

## Committee of Commerce to Robert and Samuel Purviance, Jr.

Gentn.                      Commercial Committee. York January 15th 1778

We are informed that you are building a Small Vessel that will be ready for Launching in a few days. We should be glad to know whether you will sell her, & what you will ask for her as she is when launched. We would wish for a speedy answer as we shall look out some where else for a suitable Vessel for our purpose if we should not purchase that you are building.

We don't doubt at all Gentn. but that you could make it convenient to take bills on the Commissioners at Paris; but we have not heard that Congress had any thoughts of drawing on them. We hope you will be able to get the draft on the Loan office paid or negotiate Certificates otherwise we don't know how we shall be able to pay the balance which it seems will be due to you. Indeed we shall be averse to making any applications to Congress for Monies for any of our Agents until they shall have furnished us with their Accounts, that we may show to Congress what ballances are due and urge the necessity of granting Warrants on the Treasury or Loan Offices for the payment thereof. We hope that this will prove an effectual Spur



to you Gentn and compel you to do what we have long since requested and what we repeat, to wit, to transmit to us your Accounts and vouchers immediately.

We are Gentn, Your Obedt serts,

Fras Lewis

William Ellery

James Forbes

RC (MdHi). In the hand of John Brown and signed by Ellery, Forbes, and Lewis.

## Elbridge Gerry to Timothy Pickering

Dear sir

York Town Jany 15 1778

On my Return from the Camp Mr Lovell informed me that he had received the Articles mentioned in your Letter of Novr 25th & having opened it in Order to know what was to be done with the Baggage, he had returned an Answer<sup>1</sup> & complied with your Request relative thereto.

The propositions in your Favour of Decr. 14th for obtaining a Reimbursement of the Cost of provissions & other Articles supplied to General Burgoyne and the other prisoners of the Convention of Saratoga before their Embarkation, were necessary in the opinion of Congress, who had previously issued their Orders to General Heath for accomplishing this purpose.<sup>2</sup>

You are doubtless informed of your Appointment with other Gentlemen from Congress & the Board of War to the important Business of reforming the Army, I sincerely wish You success in this Business & remain sir with much Esteem, yours sincerely,

E. Gerry

P.S. I wish to be informed with the Contents of the Cargo of the Vessel lately taken at Wilmington.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on supplying the convention troops, see Henry Laurens to William Heath, December 23, 1777.

## Henry Laurens to John Adams

Sir,

York Town 15th Jany 1778

I was honoured on the 7th Inst. by the Receipt of your favor of the 9th Ultio. by the hands of Mr. Thaxter.

I desired that Young Gentleman to call on me the Morning after he arrived intending to have conversed with him & to have aimed at

some plan for procuring a suitable employment for him, but I found that by the Interest of other friends he had been introduced into the Secretary's Office. You may depend upon it Sir, if it shall hereafter be in my power I will not fail to join those friends in order to give him a lift in proportion to his merit. For my own part long experience has convinced me that inaccuracy & confusion attend supernumerary Clerks in any Office. The Duties of mine demand the Eye & hand of the principal & afford sufficient, oftentimes heavy, employment for every moment between adjournments & meetings of Congress, borrowing deeply of the Night & stirring very early every Morning but there is not half work enough for a Clerk who would have the whole day for the easy business of Copying which is all he ought to be entrusted with, I have a Young Man who serves me tolerably well in that branch & at intervals he finds other necessary work to do.

You will learn Sir, that by the present conveyance I have dispatched an Act of Congress of the 8th Inst. to Your Council & two Copies to General Heath, for suspending the embarkation of General Burgoyne, it would have given me great pleasure if a copy could have been obtained for you in time for the present conveyance but to this hour I have not been able to procure one for any State southward of this. This is one of the benefits arising from superabundant assistance, I could have Copied the whole with my own hand in twice 24 hours.

I feel myself exceedingly anxious lest Great Britain should get the start of us in publishing in her own terms & Glossings an account of this great event at the several Courts in Europe. I believe the Committee of foreign Correspondence have yet only one Copy which I delivered no sooner than yesterday to Mr. Lovel & if I understood him he did not intend to transmit that by the present conveyance, I beg leave therefore to submit to your consideration the propriety of procuring immediately accurate Copies from the originals above mentioned & dispatch one by every Vessel that shall Sail for any part of France within a Month or Six Weeks from Boston directed to our Commissioners at Paris. I would wish in order to guard against accidents to send at least six repeated Copies, the expence of Copying compared with the benefits which may arise from such early intelligence is not equal to a drop compared with the Ocean. Certified Copies under your hand will enable the Commissioners to represent our conduct in a true light at all the foreign Courts & to defeat wicked attempts to calumniate Congress which will be made by British Agents. I think our Act stands upon a firm bottom. It will appear when truly Reported to be as justifiable as it was necessary. Let us if possible for once take the lead of those who trust in lies & misrepresentation for success.

Mr. Lovel will no doubt inform you of the trick played upon us by palming a bundle of blank Papers for a Packet of Letters & dis-

patches from our said Commissioners & according to the account which the bearer of the above mentioned Counterfeit gives, this is the third instance within a few Months past of Interception on the other side of the Water; in the present Case there is too much the appearance of unpardonable remissness in those friends of ours, who ought to be incessantly watchful.

It appears to me, our circumstances there are deplorable & require immediate aid to keep us in any tolerable Credit with out self Interested friends & from being despised & hissed by our Enemies.

Concerning the Captivity of Mr. Howe I wish for it as anxiously as you do, but I will not Insure it this Winter, Providence has favoured us in the discovery of his designs with the Troops of the Northern Hero & I trust enabled us to frustrate them, otherwise strings of Captivity might have appeared even about York Town.

I flatter my self with hopes of your determination to accept the Commission which I lately transmitted you & of your proceeding very soon to attend the duties of it. I pray God to give you a speedy & pleasant passage & to protect you against the hands of our Enemies.

My Compliments to Mr. S. Adams whom I long to see in Congress again & believe me to be with great Esteem & regard, Dear sir, Your most humble servant,  
Henry Laurens

RC (MHi). Endorsed by Adams: "President Lawrence Jany 15th 1778. Recd & answered Feby. 4, 1778."

## Henry Marchant to Henry Laurens

South Kingstown State of Rhode Island &

Honored Sir,

January 15th. 1778

I have had the honor of Yours of the 15th of December inclosing the Resolution of Congress of the 12th of the same Month appointing me one of the Commissioners for inquiring into the Causes of the Failure of the late intended Expedition against Rhode Island under the Command of General Spencer and into the conduct of the General Officers employed upon that Occasion. The Commands of Congress must be honorable—And the Politeness with which You so happily communicate them must be powerful Inducements to a ready Compliance with Them. Nothing but those Considerations, and the great Propriety I conceive of the Measure could have persuaded me to a Task, I felt myself very incompetent to, and which will be rather invidious, as the ground has already been travelled over by a Committee of the States more immediately concerned in the Expedition. I am much releived however under my Difficulties when I consider the Light I shall receive from the other Gentlemen under Appointment. The Zeal I have for the Honor of the American



Arms and the public Service, while it creates a proportionable Diffidence, stimulates me to an Exertion of the Powers I have. Happy shall I be on this and every other Occasion my Services should prove as beneficial to my Country, as it is my most ardent Wish they may. I shall endeavour Sir to meet the Gentlemen at Providence on the Day appointed.

I have the Pleasure to inform You that the Credit of the Currency is reviving. A vile bartering Trade which had very generally taken place is almost entirely done with. Goods are brought out from the Repositories of monopolizers, and Shops are numerous and well filled—Extortion shakes—and a virtuous concern for the public Weal very apparently emerges from that Gulph of Darkness, Folly and Destruction wherein she had been too long bound by the Artifices of Our open Enemies—Tories—and those Pretenders to Whiggism. But She requires the constant attention of Congress to give her full Strength and to preserve Her from a like Disaster.

When I was at Providence the Keeper of the Loan Office informed me he had very few certificates left. That he had often wrote to Mr. Govit respecting the Office but never had any Answer. I apprehend that all the Loan offices ought to be immediately well supplied, as the Time draws nigh when Lenders may be foreclosed from Drafts for the Interest in France. The current will every Day run stronger into the Loan offices.

Upwards of twenty Men of War and One hundred and fifty if not two hundred Transports are now in Our Harbour of Newport chiefly it is presumed from the Deleware. The great number of Sailors and Marines that must be on board with at least 3500 Soldiers upon the Island renders the Safety of the Towns and Estates upon the Rivers and Bays very precarious, and puts a Load upon this State, that without more Assistance than we have yet had from our Sister States and more constantly supplied, must bear it down and end in its Ruin. It is to be wished that Congress would consider Our State and Situation. It is to be acknowledged that Congress have born, and doubtless will continue to sustain chief Part of the Expenditure—but save this (and money alone will not support a State against a formidable Enemy) This State has drawn no Continental Aid. But Her Sons have marched in as great Proportion as the other States and joined the Continental Army—have fought Their Battles and nobly defended Their *Garrisons*. But I need not add, I know it is the Wish and Intention of Congress to afford equal Assistance where it is equally wanted. I have the Honour to be Dear Sir, Your most obedient and very humble Servant,

Hy Marchant

RC (DNA: PCC, item 78). Endorsed by Charles Thomson: "Read 9 Feby 1778. Referred to the board of treasury." Endorsed by Elbridge Gerry: "Refd. to treasury. 250,000 Dollars Sent to Rhode Island abt March 16th & Loan office Certificates answered."

JANUARY 16, 1778

Cornelius Harnett to Jethro Sumner

Dear Sir

York Jany 16. 1778

I take the Liberty of writing to you by my worthy friend Mr. Harvey, he tells me he is acquainted with you. I could wish Our No. Carolina Officers would shew him, Mr. Dana from Massachusetts, & Genl Fulson from New Hampshire, every mark of respect in their Power; Mr. Harvey will Introduce these two last Gentl. to you, Coll Clark & the Other Officers. I understand you have lately got plenty of Tea & Lo Sugar, for gods sake send me a Little, if you can conveniently procure it for me I will send the money as soon as I hear from you. I wait with Impatience to hear from Our State. Since Coll Martin has resigned I am sorry an Application was made to the State, as the Line of Preferment was easily marked out had not that Gent. stood in the way. I shall be glad to hear from you & am with regard,  
Dr Sir, Your most Obed Servt,                      Cornl Harnett

RC (NN). Addressed: "Coll Jethro Sumner, Camp Valley Forge."

Marine Committee to the  
Eastern Navy Board

Gentlemen

January 16th 1778

We have before us your Letters of the 18th November and the 16th and 19th of December last. We Should have sent an answer to the first before this Time, but have waited for the resolutions of Congress on the report of this Committee respecting the principal parts of that letter. We now inclose you the resolutions of Congress on all points about which you requested information, excepting that of Pay and Rations for officers not in actual service, which is postponed for further consideration.<sup>1</sup>

When Congress shall have determined thereon we will transmit to you their Resolution. We inclose you likewise a Resolution of Congress of the 9th of Decemr. and the opinion of the Marine Committee of the 25th of March from their Books which hath long since been transmitted to the Continental Agents; and also twelve blank Commissions and fifty Warrants. You will inquire for such Continental officers as are out of employ and commissionate them, and not others, unless such cannot be found.

A Bill drawn by the Honorable Thomas Cushing Esqr. superintendant of the building of the 74 Gun Ship and frigate in Massachusetts Bay hath been presented to Congress and paid, and is charged by the Marine Committee to your Board, for which he must be accountable to you. The amount is 13359 Dollars. You will please

to inform him that applications for Money and any thing respecting these Ships ought regularly to be made to you. In answer to yours of the 16 December we observe what you have said respecting the equipment of a Number of Brigts to employ our officers not in actual service and to Cruize on the Trade of the enemy is a measure that cannot be gone into at this time.<sup>2</sup> The Dispatch must pursue her intended Voyage—The Necessity of fulfilling our Contracts requires it. A voyage is planned for the Mellish and we shall have employment for the Schooner and every other Vessel we can procure. We have wrote to the Navy Board in this District and to Maryland about the purchasing flour and Iron for the use of the Navy in your department<sup>3</sup> and so soon as we shall have got things in a proper train shall give you notice of it.

We are at a loss to determine precisely what you mean by the distribution of Prize Money among supernumerary officers as to each Vessel a Certain Number of Officers is assigned among whom and the seamen the prizes are to be distributed, all above that number are useless and cannot be entitled to a share of Prizes otherwise than Privates.

We are sorry to find that you were under the necessity of augmenting the wages of the Carpenters in Connecticut. As Committees are met at New Haven to regulate the Prices of Provisions and other Articles we hope you will be able soon to reduce the wages to sums proportionate to such regulations.

In answer to your last of the 19th of December, The account of the arrival of Captain Chews valuable prize gave us great pleasure. We hope the Boston will be soon at sea; and don't doubt but you will take proper Steps for the preservation of the Warren, Providence and Columbus. How many of the Continental Agents could have paid Commodore Hopkins the one twentieth part of all prizes taken before his suspension and since his arrival from the Bahamas we cannot conceive when the inclosed determination of the Marine Committee of the 25th of March was immediately transmitted to them for their Government.<sup>4</sup>

As to a Supply of Cash we presume before this Time you have received the Warrants granted the 3d of December for 100,000 Dollars which we think you could not have received when you wrote the 19th December. We send you a Copy of the New Signals for the Navy of which you will order your Clerk to make out Copies and see that they are delivered to the Commanding officers of the Ships in your district as soon as may be.

We are Gentlemen, yr hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup>For the resolves of January 8, which were intended to encourage naval recruitment in general and the manning of the frigate *Providence* in particular, see *JCC*, 10:28–29. On January 19–21 Congress considered the issue of pay and



rations for naval officers not in active service, but not until March 20 was it finally agreed to allow such officers pay but neither rations nor subsistence money. See *JCC*, 10:61, 65, 68, 73, 272.

<sup>2</sup> On December 16 the Eastern Navy Board had voted to write a letter to the Marine Committee informing them "of the necessity of a number of Brigs being fitted out to Cruise against the Enemy," and on the 17th the following vote was recorded: "This Board Conceiving it to be for the public Advantage that the Briga. Dispatch belonging to the Continent and under the care of John Bradford Esqr. should be improved as an Armed Vessell for which she is now in great measure fixed therefore, Voted That a Letter be wrote to Mr. Bradford to desire him to Suspend the Execution of the orders he may have relative to that Vessell till we can get an Answer to what we have wrote to the Marine Committee on that Subject." "Votes & Resolutions of the Navy Board of the Eastern department," Continental Congress Collection, DLC. Although the Marine Committee could not spare the few remaining seaworthy vessels for this purpose, they were currently organizing another plan aimed at disrupting enemy shipping in the lower Delaware. See Marine Committee to John Barry, January 29, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> See Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board and to William Smith, January 7 and 10, 1778.

<sup>4</sup> The Marine Committee's March 25, 1777, resolves concerning the distribution of prize money recommended that officers and crew of Esek Hopkins' fleet were entitled to share in all prizes taken before the fleet's return to New London in April 1776 and that all prizes taken after that time "be shared by the respective Captors." But Hopkins was not, the committee explained, entitled to share in any prizes taken by the brig *Andrew Doria* after July 11, 1776, or by the sloop *Providence* after August 6, 1776, when these vessels came under direct orders from the Marine Committee. Nathaniel Shaw Collection, CtNIHi.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

York Town Jany. 16th. 1778

A Committee of Congress, Colo. Reed, Mr. Harvey, Mr. Dana and Genl. Fulsom are ordered to consult with you and Council on the Expediency of an Expedition this winter against Philada. and on your encouragement depends the undertaking, which is to be determined by the Committee in conjunction with G. Washington, and three members of the new board of war, Genl. Gates, Genl. Mifflin and Coll. Pickering.<sup>1</sup> The expediency or in expediency I believe will chiefly depend on our States supplying at least our own Militia that shall be called out with provisions, *at the Continental expence*, grounded on yr. offer and surely every nerve will be exerted, for if we do not retake our Capital this winter, besides the horrid devastation the Enemy may make next Spring in this State when reenforced, when shall we be able to rout them out of Philadelphia? If the voice of Providence may be concluded from the offers of neighbouring States in addition to the Continental Army, and our own Strength surely we may say without presumption, on this and many other accounts, now is the most opportune occasion. Maryland has offered 3000 Militia, Virginia 10 Regiment besides 2000 new Recruits to fill up

her Battalion, No. Carolina      besides that New Jersey is full of ardour and would fly to the attack. I trust no discouragement will be given by our State. I know that the shameful want of Provisions is to be attributed to an erroneus arrangement of the Commissarial Department, but it is no time for recriminations. Cannot our State engage skilful patriotic purchasers, and in different parts of this and in the neighbouring States, with full exertion gain the necessary supplies of meat as well as bread provision.<sup>2</sup> Baron Stuben a Lt. general and experienced Officer in the King of Prussia's Service has offered his Services to Congress which are accepted, and he required to repair to Gen. Washington's Hd. Quarters. The Business of the Committee with the three Gentl of the board of war & Gen. W are to reform the army by reducing the Regiments and introducing decipline. The Baron may be very useful on the occasion. I am respectfully, Sir, Yr. most ob. huml. Servt,

Danl. Roberdeau

P.S. The Council will naturally correspond with Coll Reed on this occasion who may have considerable wait in the Council at Head Quarters.

RC (PHarH).

<sup>1</sup> Roberdeau was explaining Congress' response to the Pennsylvania Council's and Assembly's January 2 letter requesting an attack on Philadelphia. See Jonathan Bayard Smith to Timothy Matlack, January 5, note; and Elbridge Gerry to George Washington, January 13, 1778, note 2.

For the committee's opposition to the proposed attack, see Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, February 3, 1778. Committee members Francis Dana and Nathaniel Folsom conferred with the Pennsylvania Council on this subject on January 20. *Pa. Council Minutes*, 11:404.

<sup>2</sup> Roberdeau's exhortation was inspired in part by the fear that competition from Continental purchasers with the state's own supply officials would jeopardize the offensive against Philadelphia recently proposed by the legislature. Only the day before Pennsylvania's delegates had unsuccessfully opposed a motion to authorize the Board of War to engage special purchasing agents to lay up 30,000 barrels of flour in magazines within the state, on the grounds that the measure was unnecessary and should not be implemented without consultation with state officials. The issue obviously generated considerable heat, because a roll call vote demanded on a motion to require prior consultation was only defeated by a six-to-five margin, with New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New Jersey joining Pennsylvania in the request, and Massachusetts, New York, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia opposed. As a sop to the state the measure finally adopted required the Board of War, *after* proceeding with new measures, to inquire of Pennsylvania "what measures have been taken for laying up magazines for the army; and if it should appear to the Board, after such enquiry, that such measures for that purpose have been taken adequate to the present critical situation . . . they . . . suspend the execution of the whole, or such parts of the foregoing resolutions, as they shall deem most conducive to the general weal." *JCC*, 10:53-56. The issue was an important one, for within three weeks Pennsylvania formally remonstrated against the activities of the board's special purchasers, precipitating a confrontation that quickly resulted in suspension of the board's new appointees. For this con-

troversy between Pennsylvania and Continental authorities, one of several to trouble Congress while the state was partially occupied by the British, see Committee at Camp Minutes of Proceedings, February 16-20, note 5; Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton, February 17; William Duer to Francis Lightfoot Lee, February 19, note 1; and Jonathan Bayard Smith to Wharton, February 26 and 28, 1778.

## Committee on Emergency Provisions to Thomas Johnson

Sir

War Office Jany 17th 1778

I have been duly honoured with your Favour of the 11th instant.<sup>1</sup> The Committee to whom I communicated it feel themselves happy in the Anticipation of the Supply they shall acquire from your Exertions, the Necessity whereof still continues & Things yet bear the same unfavourable Aspect.<sup>2</sup> Pork can be procured here at £4.10 per hundred but Salt is not to be had for curing any large Quantity. The Committee will not prescribe Price or any other Matter to you as they are so perfectly satisfied of your better Judgment in the Business arising within your State. The Seisures & Certificates in Consequence of them were intended to be levelled against & given to Engrossers & Speculators great Numbers of whom abound in the State of Maryland equal at least to Persons of that pernicious Cast in any other State.<sup>3</sup> They extend their Purchases & Influence into this State wherein the Board of War have had repeated Information they have purchased up great Quantities of Provisions & every Article wanted for the Army. These avaritious & dangerous People had raised the Expectations of the People so high that no reasonable Price would command their Commodities. This Consideration induced the Idea of Seisures & Certificates & the Committee cannot but think that the severest Steps would be justifiable with People whose sole Motive was Gain. Any Loss they may sustain will be but a proper Punishment. As to the Persons who grow or raise Provisions on their Farms the Case is to be sure different. The Committee are sensible of the Justice of your Excellency's Observations as to the Bay Navigation. They shew too the Necessity of forwarding everything we can during the Winter when the Men of War do not venture so high up the Bay. Your Sentiments as to the Necessity of building Boats of a proper Construction have been laid before the Marine Committee who have had some such Measure in Contemplation & will no Doubt immediately take Steps for having them built. Mean time if your Excellency can have Tobacco Flatts, Shallops & other Craft fitted for a temporary Purpose all Expences in hiring, buying or repairing them will be borne. The Treasury Board will take Care to furnish the necessary Supply of Cash & either transmitt it to you or pay your Drafts as you shall deem



most proper. I enclose the Information herewith sent for your Excellency's Consideration & Enquiry & have the Honour to be, Your very obed Sevt,

Francis Lightfoot Lee

RC (MB). In the hand of Richard Peters and signed by Francis Lightfoot Lee.

<sup>1</sup> Governor Johnson's January 11 letter to President Laurens is in PCC, item 70, fols. 237-38.

<sup>2</sup> See the committee's December 31, 1777, letter to Johnson.

<sup>3</sup> In his January 11 letter, Johnson had contended that "the Council and myself on Inquiring cannot learn that there is any Body much less a practice of ingrossing Provisions in this State."

## Henry Laurens to Patrick Henry

Sir

17th Jany 1778

I had the honor of writing to your Excellency the 12th Inst. by Messenger, Seals.

Your Excellency will receive under the present Cover, for the State of Virginia, a very solemn & important Act of Congress of the 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of Lieutt. General Burgoyne & his Troops until the Convention of Saratoga shall be explicitly Ratified by the Court of Great Britain & properly notified to Congress, a Measure which Congress after long & the most circumspect deliberation, judged to be their indispensable duty, equally justifiable & necessary, hence the House rest Satisfied that their Resolves will be confirmed by the approbation of those who are most nearly concerned, all their Constituents throughout these United States, & are as Strongly persuaded that the Justice & good Policy of the Act will be acknowledged by every disinterested Court in Europe.

Your Excellency will also find inclosed an Act of 29th December<sup>1</sup> for bringing to punishment such of the Inhabitants of these States as shall have joined or hereafter may join the Enemy & afterwards made prisoners by us.

I am with very great Respect &ca.<sup>2</sup>

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> In reality this act was passed on December 30. *JCC*, 9:1069.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens also wrote virtually the same letter this day to Govs. Thomas Johnson of Maryland, Richard Caswell of North Carolina, and John Treutlan of Georgia. PCC, item 13, fols. 139-41.

## Henry Laurens to Enoch Poor

Sir,<sup>1</sup>

17th Jany 1778.

The Letter signed by your self & Brigadr. Gen Patterson dated 21st December came duly to hand.<sup>2</sup> I presented it immediately to Congress, & it was referred by the House to the Committee appointed to inquire into the Causes of the loss of Tyconderoga—of which I should have advised you some days ago, but deferred writing from an expectation of bringing the Committee together & of proceeding so far in the enquiry as would have enabled me to have transmitted you an Account somewhat more interesting than a Simple acknowledgement of the Receipt of your Letter which is all I have at present to offer, except to assign a reason for what might otherwise appear to you, to be neglect on the part of Congress. Two of the three original Members of the Committee, Mr. J Adams & Mr R H Lee, had retired from Congress—of which I reminded the House some days before your Letter appeared, in consequence of which the Revd. Doctor Witherspoon & Mr. Dana were added to the Committee.<sup>3</sup> These Gentlemen have not been unmindful of their duty, but unable after several attempts even to enter upon that part which we are speaking of. The business before Congress for a Month past has been uncommonly extensive & burthensome, too much of it, which ought to have been performed by Gentlemen who are largely paid by the public; these circumstances have rendered it impracticable for the Members to give that dispatch which they wish for to every branch & besides we had been waiting in expectation of receiving further accounts in answer to Enquiries which had been made in several departments Northward & Eastward. Mr. Dana is now ordered on a Committee to Camp where you will have an opportunity of speaking to him. In his absence Mr. Witherspoon & my self will prepare for making a Report immediately after his return to Congress.

I beg leave to assure General Patterson & your self that I feel sensibly for your honour & although I am so closely employed by the necessary duties of my Office as not to be allowed quite time for common refreshments, I will exert my endeavors to bring this Enquiry to an Issue & to releive you from a State of suspense which must have been very painful. Inclosed herein you will find an Act of Congress of the 5th Inst. for appointing the Reverd Mr. Evans Chaplain to your Brigade—a circumstance which the Reverend Gentleman was apprized of by a Copy of this Resolve.<sup>4</sup> I have the honour to be &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Enoch Poor (1736–80), a New Hampshire merchant and Continental brigadier general, was one of several general officers under investigation by Congress for their role in the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Mount Independence during

the summer of 1777. *DAB*. For a general discussion of this investigation, see John Hancock to Arthur St. Clair and Philip Schuyler, August 5, 1777, note.

<sup>2</sup> This letter from Poor and John Paterson, which explained their reasons for having favored the evacuation of Ticonderoga, was read in Congress on December 27 and referred to committee. PCC, item 163, fols. 514-15; and *JCC*, 9:1055.

<sup>3</sup> Francis Dana, John Witherspoon, and William Ellery had been added to this committee on December 26. See *JCC*, 9:1053.

<sup>4</sup> Congress made this appointment shortly after reading a December 22 letter from Poor recommending Rev. Israel Evans for the office. PCC, item 78, 18:159; and *JCC*, 9:1055, 10:18.

## Henry Laurens to John Rutledge

Sir,

17th Jany 1778.

The last which I had the honour of writing to your Excellency is dated the 2d Inst. & still lies on the Table. This delay has been owing to several Causes, a continued expectation of receiving dispatches from your Excellency by Messenger Zimmerman, who does not yet appear—waiting for the papers which will go under the present Cover—& lately for a proper Man to Send as a Messenger, such an one is not at this Instant to be found. I have, from the Multiplicity of business which has occurred for a Month past exhausted the Stock of regular Messengers & have been obliged upon several occasions to employ Light Horse Man.

Under this Cover Your Excellency will receive for the State of South Carolina, a very solemn & important Act of Congress of the 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of Lieutt. General Burgoyne & his Troops until the Convention of Saratoga shall be explicitly Ratified by the Court of Great Britain & properly notified to Congress—A measure, which after the most circumspect deliberation, Congress were compelled to adopt as their indispensable Duty, equally justifiable & necessary. The House therefore rest satisfied that their Resolves will be confirmed by the approbation of all their Constituents throughout these United States who are most nearly concerned; & are as Strongly persuaded that the Justice & good policy of the Act will be acknowledged by every disinterested Court in Europe.

Your Excellency will also find inclosed an Act of the 29 [30th] December for bringing to punishment when practicable, such of the Inhabitants of these States as have joined or shall join the Enemy.

I am &c.



## Henry Laurens to William Shippen, Jr.

Dear Sir,

17th Jan'y 1778

This afternoon Your favour of the 18th wrong dated came to hand, I will offer it to Congress on Monday Morning.<sup>1</sup> In the mean time permit me to refer you to my Letters of the 7th & 12th Inst. which will be delivered you with this. Those Letters were down at the Ferry three days ago & returned under a Report that the River was impassable. I have not the least doubt Sir but that you will acquit your Self before Congress to the Satisfaction of the House & to your own Honour.

Be assured I am with great respect.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> In this letter—which is endorsed “Received 17 Jan'y 1778. Misdated 18th. Read 19th”—Dr. Shippen promised that he would soon provide Congress with documentary evidence refuting the allegations of mismanagement in the medical department made by Dr. Benjamin Rush and Gov. William Livingston. PCC, item 78, 20:171–74; and JCC, 10:60.

## James Lovell to Benjamin Franklin

Jan'y. 17th. 1778

Your favor of Oct'r has come to my hand this week.<sup>1</sup> I am well persuaded that all your blottings woud not only do you the credit hinted at by the Poet whom you quote, but be quite sufficient to embellish the performances of some who take to themselves vast merit for their Writings. And I sincerely lament that you did not arrive early enough at Paris to blot & correct the first MS works referred to in my criticisms of July last. They were vile Catch-pennies.

I have wrote to you by this opportunity officially in Committee concerning the robbery of the Dispatches sent by John Folger;<sup>2</sup> but I must here take up that subject again as I am Individually of opinion that the man is honest tho' I can by no means celebrate his discretion.

I beleive the theft was committed by some one intimately connected with your affairs, who knew the nature of *all* the Papers intended to be sent.

Had only the main Dispatches been stolen, I shoud not be so sanguine as I am in my belief of a bosom traitor being concerned. But some valuable paper was taken from the midst of a parcel of Gazettes wch. were under seal to R.H. Lee & directed probably by the same person who superscribed the other parcel of Gazettes for him, but did not I believe seal them, as the impression is not the same made use of upon a Letter which came safe for him. Now why was not the large handsome Packet for Robt. Morris unseald, why was

not that for President Hancock wch. containd the several Copies of Anecdotes respecting T. Morris. Why was not the one for B. Deane which had on its outside a pressing recommendation to forward it by Express at the first convenient stage after landing? Why was not yours to me who am a Delegate as well as R.H. Lee, mine containing many pieces of Baron Steuben's writing. All those Seals were sound & original, as well as all Mr. Izards. The reason is evident. The thief knew the only two Enclosures of public concern, For I take R.H. Lee's to have been such as well as the main packet. This you can know by enquiring of his worthy Brothers. The hand writing & Seals of the Covers of the two parcels robbd might have afforded some clue but you see by the minutes of examination that both those Covers were thrown away.<sup>3</sup>

Tr (MH-H). In the hand of Arthur Lee and endorsed by him: "Copy [of] a Letter Signed James Lovell."

<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly Franklin's October 7, 1777, letter to Lovell, which discussed the preparation of contracts with French officers and enclosed papers from Baron von Steuben. Franklin, *Writings* (Smyth), 7:65-67.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the Committee for Foreign Affairs' letter to the American Commissioners at Paris of January 12, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> Lee's Tr ends abruptly at mid-page.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Conway

Sir,

19th Jany 1778

Your favor of the 5th Curr. reached me in due course & I immediately reported it to Congress, but no order was made respecting the Contents. Probably the powers which the Committee of Members from Congress & from the new board of War who are now proceeding to Camp, are vested with may have rendred a special order unnecessary.

I return you my hearty thanks Sir for your kind wishes respecting my self, I would even chearfully undergo another Months Gout, to remove the misunderstandings & heal those divisions in Camp which you allude to.<sup>1</sup> I trust however that other & more effectual means will be found for accomplishing an end so desirable & important at least for repressing the Rage of party.

Monsr. Le Chevalier Lanuville has much dependance upon your knowledge & recommendation of him to the Committee, with whom I believe it will rest to gratify his wishes for Military promotion—a Subject which for various & obvious reasons I cannot descant upon. Nevertheless I think he has Strong pretensions to the Consideration of Congress & I make no doubt but that the House will do every thing for him that he can reasonably desire.

I have the honour to be &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Congress received striking evidence this day of these "misunderstandings" and "divisions" in the form of two memorials from ten general officers vehemently protesting Conway's promotion to major general. *JCC*, 10:63; and PCC, item 155, 1:51-53, item 162, fols. 276-79.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir,

York Town 19 January 1778

I have within a few days past been honoured by the Receipt of several Letters from you, which have been duly presented to Congress & I had entertained hopes of transmitting the necessary answers by Mr Brown but Congress have not yet enabled me nor can I even recite the dates. Your Letters are in the hands of Committees & not at this time of day accessible. I will endeavour to urge the business forward & particularly the article of Money & hope to address you again within two or three days.

I am with great Respect, sir, Your obedient & very humble servt,  
Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (MHi).

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

19th Jany 1778.

Your Excellency will receive by the present conveyance a Letter which I had the honour of writing the 14th & was returned to me with a Report that Susquehana was impassable.

Congress having upon further consideration judged it impolitic & unnecessary to inform the Court of Great Britain authentickly of the suspension of General Burgoyne's embarkation until such information shall proceed from him, have directed me to desire your Excellency will delay the intended requisition for passports to General Howe for further determination.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Secretary Thomson did not record in the journals Congress' decision to defer asking Gen. William Howe for passports for vessels to bring supplies to Burgoyne's army in Massachusetts. See also *JCC*, 10:45.



## Jonathan Bayard Smith to Timothy Matlack

Dr. Sir

York Town Jan. 19th. 1778

Your letter to Mr Thompson concerning the Journals of Congress was given to the Committee for conducting the publication, of which I am. The Committee wish them to remain at Lancaster till further orders; & are negotiating with Mr. Dunlap for continuing them.<sup>1</sup> If you see him I wish you would urge his coming to this place immediately.

Our last accounts from Europe discover a very unsettled system of Politics in the Courts; but at the [same] time the preparations for war are very great; & [the] indulgences & favors to America almost beyond description. Several others appear to wait for the decisions at Versailles, but are apparently more matured, especially that of Madrid. The loss of Ticonda. hurt us much. The fate of Burgoyne will reestablish. As to domestic affairs you are fully informed. Congress has decisive orders in the case of our unhappy prisoners.<sup>2</sup> We have a deputation from the freinds in Virginia in behalf of their Society, which is referred to a Committee.<sup>3</sup>

My respects to Mrs. Matlack, Mr Marshall & freinds with you.

I am Sir with regard, Yr. fd. & v. h. st.

J B Smith

RC (PHarH). Addressed: "Colo. Timothy Matlack, Secy. to Supreme Executive Council, Lancaster."

<sup>1</sup> Smith had been added to the committee for printing the journals of Congress on January 16. On May 2, 1778, the committee was directed "to employ John Dunlap to continue to print the said journal, instead of Robert Aitkin." See *JCC*, 10:58, 11:416.

<sup>2</sup> Although this letter is clearly dated January 19 and there is nothing in its appearance to suggest that it was not written at a single sitting, this sentence and the next pertain to issues considered in Congress on January 21 and 22. On the 21st a Board of War report on the condition of American prisoners in British custody was entered on the journals which formed the basis for a lengthy resolve on the supply of prisoners and directions to General Washington to guide his negotiations with General Howe for improving their treatment. See *JCC*, 10:74-81.

<sup>3</sup> The "deputation," six Quakers led by Isaac Zane, had asked that they be granted a hearing to present "the Sufferings of our Friends, and perticularly to Revive the Case of our Brethern that have been Sent from their Families to Winchester & now in Confinement." Their petition—dated January 21 and endorsed by Charles Thomson "read 22 Jany 1778, referred to Mr Ellery, Mr Henry, Mr Clark, who are directed to hear the petitioners"—is in *PCC*, item 41, 10:732-33. The committee reported on January 28 that they had had a "conference" with the petitioners, and the following day Congress resolved that the prisoners at Winchester be released on subscribing to an oath or affirmation of allegiance. See *JCC*, 10:85, 96, 98. See also John Hancock to William Livingston, August 30, 1777, note 1.

## Francis Lightfoot Lee to Arthur Lee

My dear Brother, York Town, Pennsylvania. January 20. 1778

As the Committee for foreign affairs write fully on public matters, by this opportunity, I need not trouble you on that score.<sup>1</sup> I will only observe that I think America stronger than ever; but as we began the war empty handed, & have ever been put to this shift; we have never been able to establish any system in the different war departments in consequence of which our expence has been much greater than it otherways need to have been. This has occasioned our paper money greatly to depreciate, & of course the expence is greatly encreased. It is therefore essential to have a fund in Europe, to enable us to support the credit of our paper. Our bror. Richard, who is now in Virginia, desires me to inform you that he has received the pocket dictionary which you sent him. I fear our Enemies will receive great advantages from the intelligence in the Packet by Folger, which they have rob'd us of. Are you sure you have no traitor about your persons? Our Enemies are so adroit in the Arts of corruption, & so powerfull in the means; that it requires the utmost circumspection. I am sorry we are still to support the whole weight of British power; I hope we shall be able to bear the burthen, but cou'd [wish?] France wou'd ease us of part; her not doing it cools the zeal of America for a connection with her. It gives me uneasyness that we have not been able to profit from the abilities of many French Officers who have offer'd their service. Being overstocked with Officers, before their arrival, & their not speaking our language, have been great impediments. Many of them are returning, I fear disgusted. I hope you have made Europe acquainted with the real importance of Philadelphia. We really suffer little by its loss, except being deprived of many valuable Artists; however we have still enough.

I do not perceive by the London Papers you sent us by Folger that the People of England are much distressed by the War; I fear they were so replete with riches, that it will take a long time to exhaust them.

Your brors & Sisters, and their families are all well. My love to the Alderman, tell him I have recd. the goods he sent by Barron & thank him. Col. Tayloe recd. his packets, I beleave by the same opportunity.

God bless you both.

Francis Lightfoot Lee

RC (N).

<sup>1</sup> See the January 12 and 21 letters of the Committee for Foreign Affairs to the Commissioners at Paris.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

Janry. 20th. [1778]

The receipt of your letters of Decr. 24th variously directed gave equal & uniform satisfaction here yesterday.<sup>1</sup>

There was an error in the date of the Commission but it is judged to be of no importance.

I send all the dispatches to you open as before that you may be acquainted with the contents, in case you should forward them before you sail yourself.

I will endeavour to send your Chest by one of the Waggons which brought Cloaths forward from Boston.

It is of high Importance that the papers respecting Burgoyne shd. go speedily forward, for reasons which Mr. Laurens has before wrote.

You may depend upon my writing to you frequently. I will not wait till I hear of opportunities, but put down every thing which I may think it behoves you to know & keep all publications which may fall into my hands containing useful matters, till accident shall furnish me a passport for them to you.

The Moment the Journals which are found shall reach York I will inclose one to you unstitched and forward sheets afterwards as they come from under the press.

I fear it will be long before I shall get possession of your Box now under the care of Mr. Sprout, who has recovered his health, and preaches in a pretty good Parish at

I have heard only today from our Secretary Paine. When he arrives he shall copy all the letters written from this & forward them to France unless I hear of the arrival of any before he comes. We have sent from York Town

Oct 6th two, with a Postscript of the 9th.

Oct. 18 one—31st one.

Nov 1st. one—8th one.

Decr. 1st one—2d one.

With Duplicates & some Triplicates.

I send you Dr. Franklin's letter to me not having time to copy it.<sup>2</sup> We had no sort of Intelligence of a public nature, but by the tone of private letters, things went pretty well. You will return the Doctor's letter.

I expect you will tell me in the most free confidential manner how I may do my duty to you or to your family; and, be well assured, Sir, I will put things into that Train which shall make your mind as much at ease as possible under yr. disagreeable separation from a large portion of your earthly felicity. I have a reference to the support of yourself & family. You know as well as I how loosely things stand with the other Gentlemen. I shall expect to hear from you on



this subject when you have conversed with them, if not before; that is if any services of mine are necessary; not otherwise.

RC (MHi). In Lovell's hand, though not signed.

<sup>1</sup> Adams' December 24, 1777, letter to Lovell indicating that he would accept appointment as commissioner to France is in Adams, *Works* (Adams), 9:471.

<sup>2</sup> See Lovell to Benjamin Franklin, January 17, 1778, note 1.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir

20th Janry. [1778]

Yesterday I received yr. favour of Decr. 28th<sup>1</sup> and was pleased to find that, after your tedious length of journey from hence to Boston, you had courage to go to Plymouth to celebrate the anniversary of the 22d of Decr. 1620. An Epicure would have said something about the clams but you turn me to the prophesies of Isaiah. Child Man is no word in use among us or perhaps I should tell you it would suit as well as the one chosen by Father West, suit, I mean, now the Veterans are absent, I would not have you think, however, that the Gentry you hint at are allowed to look after their *private* affairs to hide them from the public; a Committee is ordered to examine what papers are now at hand; but it was expected that Mr. J. Adams & Coll. R.H. Lee would collect some materials, tho' absent. You cannot have been more surprized than *some* here have been chagrined at the notice taken of St. C——.<sup>2</sup> You could not expect more smartness in a Resolve which was meant to rap a Demi G—— over the Knuckles, than what you found in the one hinted at. What a fatality attends some men in the choice of their favorites! It seems as if honest men are not to be found in the 13 United States sufficient to make aids de Camp, Secretaries and privy Councillors to one great Man, whom no Citizen *shall* dare even to talk about say the Gentlemen of the Blade.<sup>3</sup>

Genl. Gates is arrived here; I suspect he will not consent to go to camp on the Committee mentioned.<sup>4</sup> In short I begin to think our Army will not be properly reformed, thro' the winter, which is half gone already.

Mr. Dana is gone on with Genl. Fulsom. I ought to have told you that both my Colleagues have altered their minds about Establishment of Half-pay. They see the aspiring temper of a set of men who are always talking about *wounded feelings, spirit of a Soldier, honor dearer than life*, &c &c when degrees of rank are in question, tho on other occasions those feelings, that Spirit and that honor have been quite problematical.

I send a packet for J.A. to your care. If he should have left America,

you will open it and put seals to all the packets inclosed; otherwise you will deliver it safely to him if in Boston or send the Express to him at Braintree if you know him to be at his own house.

Best respects to Mrs. Adams from, Dear Sir, Your Friend & humble  
Servt.

J.L.

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Adams' December 28, 1777, letter to Lovell is in the Pequot Library manuscripts deposited at CtY.

<sup>2</sup> Lovell is referring to the continuing investigation of the evacuation of Forts Ticonderoga and Mount Independence involving particularly Gens. Arthur St. Clair and Philip Schuyler. Later this day Lovell was added to the committee conducting this investigation. *JCC*, 10:66. For further information, see John Hancock to St. Clair and Schuyler, August 5, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> Lovell's oblique criticisms of Washington probably refer to the December 10, 1777, resolves directing Washington to utilize his authority to commandeer supplies and a January 3, 1778, resolve granting Washington authority to employ more aides-de-camp. *JCC*, 9:1013-15, 10:15.

<sup>4</sup> Apparently because of his antipathy to Washington, Gates "offered such strong reasons for his not going to camp" that the Board of War, of which he was president, recommended that he be excused. Later this same day, Congress first endorsed the board's recommendation, and then decided to exempt all the members of the Board of War from attending the committee at camp because they were needed "immediately" to enter upon the business of their department. Charles Carroll and Gouverneur Morris were thereupon elected to replace Gates, Thomas Mifflin, and Timothy Pickering. See *JCC*, 10:65-67. See also Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates, January 14, 1778; and Committee at Camp Minutes of Proceedings, January 28-31, 1778, note 1.

## Marine Committee to Robert and Samuel Purviance, Jr.

Gentlemen

Marine Committee York Jan'y 20th 1778

We acknowledge the receipt of your Favour of the 10th inst. and agreeable to your requisition We now inclose you herein A Warrant of Congress upon the Loan officer of your State for Ten Thousand Dollars which you will apply to the Credit of this Committee.<sup>1</sup> If the Office cant furnish out the Cash, we wish you would, if you can negotiate them, take Loan Office Certificates in Lieu thereof.

We rejoice to hear that Captain Nicholson is off your hands,<sup>2</sup> and now require you to make up your Accounts with this Committee and transmit them as soon as possible. We are, Gentn., Your hble Servts,

Henry Laurens, President

RC (NHpR).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 10:51.

<sup>2</sup> But see Marine Committee to James Nicholson, January 28, 1778.

## Robert Morris to Henry Laurens

Sir

Manheim Jan'y 20th. 1778

I received some packets of Letters & News papers yesterday after they had got wet by the Carrier breaking through the Ice into Susquhanah.

Two of these Packets appeared to have been opened, one of them Mr. Brown informs me was opened by you through mistake which is very well, but how the other came so I dont know. In one of these I found the letters herein enclosed dated London June 18th, June 27th & August 29th, but no letter from the person who sent them, *that* I suspect has been taken out perhaps by the same hand that stole the public dispatches. I have it not in my power therefore to explain these letters, but believe they are wrote by a Gentn that I *know* in London either to Mr Deane or Mr Carmichael.

I also enclose herein Mr. Deanes letter to me of the 23d August which altho a triplicate is the only Copy that has reached me. Judging the Contents of these letters wou'd be agreeable to Congress & indeed proper for their knowledge, I take the liberty to trouble you with them & that from Mr. Deane had (probably) best be deposited with the Marine Committee.

Your Excellcy will also find amongst the enclosures a letter from the Baron Steuben arrived at Portsmouth in New England which altho directed to me on the Cover is addressed to You within. Perhaps it may be proper to lay this & the Copies of letters that attend it before Congress that they may be prepared to Receive his application for employment.

I have the honour to remain, Your Excellencys most obedt hble servt.

Robt Morris

P.S. I will send the News Papers if wanted by Congress.<sup>1</sup>

RC (DNA: PCC, item 137).

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of Morris' leave of absence and activities at Manheim, see Robert Morris to the Committee of Commerce, December 17, 1777, note 1. For a brief January 17 letter he directed to James Lovell of the Committee for Foreign Affairs, which he used to forward letters from C. W. F. Dumas and William Bingham, see PCC, item 137, appendix, fol. 205.

A January 22 letter Morris wrote to Elbridge Gerry, supporting John Langdon's proposal for exchanging his brother Woodbury Langdon (recently detained by the British at New York) for Gov. William Franklin, is in the Ely Autograph Collection, NjHi. And a January 23 letter he directed to Committee of Commerce Secretary John Brown, which is in the deCoppett Collection, NjP, contains the following references to matters of congressional interest. "I received your favours of the 13th and 19th Inst. with the Sundry letters & papers and thank you for them. They had like to've been lost in Susquehannah—young Mr. Slough having broke in with them. When I am sorting the Secret Committees papers I will send you the letter of the Governor of New Orleans if it is here, and shall be glad you will compleat the payments of the several bills running on me & send them here, poor Pliarne I am sorry for him indeed."



Committee for Foreign Affairs to the  
Commissioners at Paris

Gentlemen                      York Town in Pensylvania, January 21st. 1778

We mean in this letter to give you a succinct view of the state of our military affairs. You must long before this reaches you have been made acquainted with the signal success of the American arms in the northern department, particularly the several Engagements in that quarter previous to the surrender of General Burgoyne & his whole army to General Gates. Since that time Ticonderoga & Mount Independence have been evacuated by the enemy, so that the whole of that Department is now in our possession. The Indians are perfectly quiet and we have lately received intelligence that those formerly in the interest of our enemies incline to our side, as also that the inhabitants of Canada in general where the enemy have but small force are much disposed to favour us. General Burgoyne and his troops are now near Boston; and on account of several very exceptionable parts of his conduct Congress have resolved that he shall not be suffered to depart till the convention of Saratoga is ratified by the Court of London.

A part of the enemies army is still in possession of Newport in Rhode Island. An expedition intended to dispossess them of that place, on account of some mistakes & neglect of those who were to make the proper preparation for it, was obliged to be laid aside, but, we expect, will some time hence be resumed. As to the armies in this state, General Howe is still in Philadelphia but possesses no part of the country round it. General Washington's army is in Huts to the westward of Schuylkill refreshing & recruiting during the winter, and it is in contemplation to call in a number of Militia and attempt to expell Howe before he can be reinforced in the spring. A part of our army is stationed at Wilmington and they with the militia on both sides of the river have been very successful in taking several of the enemy's vessels since winter set in. A committee of Congress has just set off for the army to assist in regulating it for the next campaign & concerting measures for the most early & vigorous operations.

Copies of newspapers & of the proceedings of Congress relating to the Convention of Saratoga are sent to you by this conveyance, besides which we hope you will have the advantage of information from Mr. Adams in person.

We are with much esteem, Gentlemen, Your humble Servants.

Jno Witherspoon

James Lovell

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir,

York Town 21st Jany. 1778

Permit me to refer to the preceeding duplicate of my last Address under the 14th Inst. by the hands of Major Spencer. In order to guard against the effects of delay or miscarriage I now transmit another Copy of the Act of Congress of the 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of General Burgoyne & his Troops, there ought to have been two, but either from multiplicity of business or from some other cause not agreeable to assign among the Writers in the Secretary's Office, only this one has been completed in time for the present Messenger.

If those Copies lately sent should have reached you, be so good as to deliver the present Inclosed to the Honorable John Adams Esquire. On the contrary if they shall, when you receive this, be missing, be pleased to cause an exact Copy to be taken & deliver the inclosed to General Burgoyne—in such case another Certified Copy shall be sent to you upon the first notification of the accident.<sup>1</sup>

I have the honour to be, With great regard, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,

Henry Laurens

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter this day to Gen. Thomas Mifflin of the Board of War, transmitting "a Bill drawn on you by Abrm. Livingston dated 7th August 1777 for Three Thousand three hundred & fifty Dollars payable at ten days sight to Alexr. Rose Esqr. which I received in a Letter from him yesterday." PCC, item 13, fol. 145.

## Henry Laurens to the Massachusetts Council

Honorable Gentlemen,

21st January 1778

Permit me to refer you to the above written duplicate of a Letter which I had the honour of transmitting by Major Spencer.<sup>1</sup> In order to guard against the effects of delay or miscarriage I shall inclose with this another Certified Copy of the Act of Congress of 8th Jany. for suspending the embarkation of General Burgoyne & his Troops. If you shall have received the former, be pleased to order the present Inclosed to be delivered to the Honorable John Adams Esquire.

Congress were yesterday informed by a Paper which I presented to the House from Maj. General Gates, that those Canadians who returned from Saratoga & had been included in the Convention, had been compelled by Sir Guy Carleton to bear Arms; should this intelligence be confirmed it will receive the necessary Consideration.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honour to be, with very great Respect, Honorable Gentlemen, Your most Obedient & Most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (M-Ar).

<sup>1</sup> See Laurens to the Massachusetts Council, January 14, 1778.<sup>2</sup> Under article 9 of the Saratoga Convention all Canadians serving with General Burgoyne were allowed to return to Canada on condition they not take up arms against the United States again during the present war. PCC, item 154, fol. 284.

## James Lovell to John Adams

Dear Sir

21st PM [January 1778]<sup>1</sup>

After the Resolve for stopping Burgoyne had passed, some were of opinion that a State of Facts found by the Committee should have preceded the reasoning. Perhaps you will judge that it is already too laboured a report. I inclose for yr. own use the State of Facts alluded to which did not enter into the business of Congress, but was only talked of.

We have intelligence now that 2 Hoits were thrown into a river; and it is declared that Carleton has scourged some of the returned Canadians to make them take up arms.

Tho the Paper containing the Affidavit of a prisoner is in Form with its oath yet I cannot myself believe the Savages *eat* our Flesh. Adieu.

J L

[P.S.] I could not get any Resolves passed so as to answer Mr. Izard's letter but will be diligent to do it soon.<sup>2</sup>

## ENCLOSURE

## A State of Facts.

That by the return of ordinance & stores taken from the enemy in the Northern department from the 19 Sept. to 17 Oct. inclusive it appears, there were only 4647 muskets, which are returned "unfit for service," 3477 bayonets without scabbards, 638 cartouch boxes, 1458 cutlasses without scabbards, 6000 dozen musket cartridges, 1135 ready or fixed shot for 32 peices of cannon & only 15 barrels grained, 2 barrels mealed powder.

That on the 16 Octr. after the preliminary articles were agreed, & the treaty drawn up in due form, & approved by general Burgoyne, & his approbation & ready concurrence in every article signified by capt. James Henry Craig to col. Wilkinson, genl. Burgoyne manifested a disposition to break off & commence hostilities.

That by the 2d preliminary article of major gen. Gates which was agreed to by lieut. genl. Burgoyne, the officers & soldiers were permitted to keep the baggage belonging to them: and by the 4th preliminary article of lieut. general Burgoyne, agreed to by major gen. Gates, "no baggage was to be molested or searched, the lieut. genl. giving his honor, that there are no public stores secreted therein."



That notwithstanding this, cartouch boxes were carried away.

That at the capitulation of St. Johns on 2d Nov. 1775, whereby the officers & men were to retain their baggage & effects, & to deliver up their *arms*, the cartouch boxes & other military accoutrements were delivered up.

That these things being known, Congress issued an order to take descriptive lists of the non commissioned officers & privates comprehended in the convention of Saratoga, as a security, that what yet remained of the convention to be fulfilled by them might be complied with. That on the 20th Novr. gen. Burgoyne refused those lists, & on the 23d of the same month justified his refusal & asserts that Sir Guy Carlton & himself released from Canada many hundred prisoners troops upon their bare parole of not serving against the King 'till exchanged; & that they have since had no other dependance than that of public faith that those men have not been indiscriminately employed in arms.

That notwithstanding this assertion, it appears from the original list of the prisoners released from Canada, now lodged with Congress, that the provinces, counties, & towns to which the prisoners released belonged, were annexed to their respective names; which for the greater security of the conquering party, were in the hand writing of the respective prisoners.

That the fifth preliminary article of lieut. gen. Burgoyne viz "upon the march the officers are not to be separated from their men, & in quarters the officers are to be lodged according to rank & are not to be hindered from roll calling & other necessary purposes of regularity" was "agreed to" by major gen. Gates "as far as circumstances will admit."

That in his letter of the 14th Novr. to Major gen. Gates, lieut. gen. Burgoyne complains that "the officers are crouded into barracks, six & seven in a room of about ten feet square & without distinction of rank" & that "he & gen. Philips after being amused with promises of quarters for 8 days together, are still in a dirty miserable tavern" &c. & concludes with this paragraph & charge "while I state to You Sir this very unexpected treatment, I intirely acquit M. Gen. Heath, & every gentleman of the military department, of any inattention to the public faith engaged in the convention. They do what they can; but while the supreme powers of the State are unable or unwilling to enforce their authority, & the inhabitants want the hospitality or indeed the common civilisation to assist Us without it, the public faith is broke, & we are the immediate sufferers."

That application has been made by lieut. gen. Burgoyne to gen. Washington for leave to embark with the troops at Rhode-Island, or some port in the Sound.

That gen. Howe has sent transports to Rhode-Island to take them in there.

That gen. Pigot in a letter of the 5 Decr. informs gen. Burgoyne, that the Reasonable, man of war, with 26 transports from the Delaware, were arrived off the harbour mouth.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Although this letter is endorsed by Adams "Letter from Mr. Lovell to me. 21 Decr. 1777," other evidence indicates that it was in fact written in January 1778. The "State of Facts" Lovell enclosed with it was undoubtedly the document President Laurens was referring to when he told Adams on January 22 that Lovell had "fully advised" him "by the present opportunity" of the suspension of General Burgoyne's embarkation. See Henry Laurens to John Adams, January 22, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> The subject of Lovell's proposed resolves has not been determined.

## Daniel Roberdeau to John Adams

Dear Sir

York Town Jany. 21st. 1778

I acknowledge your favors of the 19th & 24th Ultimo, and with great pleasure find you obey the call of yr. Country.<sup>1</sup> May it prove her advantage and your honor, of which I have not the least doubt, notwithstanding the deficiency you mention. I shall highly esteem a constant correspondence with you, which I shall endeavour to encourage and improve a friendship I so greatly value.

A lex talionis has this day unanimously passed Congress so matured by the repeated barbarities of our Enemies that a very long report from the board of war on the subject had an uncommon quick passage thro the House,<sup>2</sup> a fate you know unusual even on trivial occasions, but it would exceed the bounds of Letter to transcribe it and unnecessary as your State and most probably yourself, will be furnished with a Copy by this Opportunity. The treatment of Canadian Prisoners on parole on their return home, being constrained by cruel usage and whippings to inlist with the British Troops corroborates the reasons for suspending the Convention at Saratoga. But I forbear a work of supererogation for our communicative friend Lovel is writing at the same table. May the Lord bless and preserve you. I am with real regard, Dear Sir, Yr. very affectionate friend & hume Servt.

Daniel Roberdeau

P.S. A Committee is this day appointed to prepare a Manifesto which will exhibit species of Cruelty in our Enemies unheard of among Nations called civilized, except from the same Tyranical hand in the East Indies.<sup>3</sup> "Vengeance is mine I will repay saith the Lord."

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Adams' decision to obey Congress' call to replace Silas Deane as commissioner to France also stimulated the writing of two other letters at about this time. For Roberdeau's January 19 letter to Abigail Adams offering sympathy in anticipation of her distress over John's impending departure for Europe, see

## In CONGRESS, December 19, 1777.

WHEREAS Sir William Howe, Commander in Chief of his Britannic Majesty's forces, has required, that provisions should be sent in for the subsistence of the American prisoners in his possession, and for the purchase of such necessaries, as they may stand in need of, and has prohibited the circulation of the money; *And* by the authority of these States, within such parts of the country, as are, at present, subjected to his power, whereby great difficulties have occurred in relieving the distresses of the American prisoners: And whereas large sums of Continental Bills of Credit have been counterfeited and issued by the Agents, Emulraries and Abettors of Sir William Howe

*Resolved*, That the accounts of all provisions and other necessaries, which already have been, or which hereafter may be supplied by the public to prisoners in the power of these States, shall be discharged, either by receiving, from the British Commissary of prisoners or any of his Agents, provisions or other necessaries equal in quality and kind to what have been supplied, or the amount thereof, in gold and silver at the rate of four shillings and sixpence sterling for every dollar of the currency of these States; and that all these accounts be liquidated and discharged, previous to the release of any prisoners, to whom provisions or other necessaries shall have been supplied.

## IN CONGRESS, January 21, 1778.

THE Board of War reported, that, having conferred with Mr. Elias Boudinot Commissary of prisoners on the 21st of December and carefully examined the evidences produced by him, they esteem it their duty to state to Congress the following facts relating to the American prisoners, in the power of the enemy.

That as far as can be collected from the testimony of prisoners and inhabitants, who have left the enemy, there are about nine hundred privates and three hundred officers in the city of New York, and about five hundred privates and fifty officers, in the city of Philadelphia.

That the privates in New York have been crowded all summer in *supper houses*, and the officers boarded on Long Island, except about thirty, who have been confined in the provost-guard and in the most loathsome goals. *That, since the beginning of October, all these prisoners, both officers and privates, have been confined in prison-ships or the provost.*

That the privates in the city of Philadelphia have been kept in the two public goals and the officers in the State-house.

That from the best evidence, which the nature of the subject will admit of, it appears, that the general allowance of provisions, at the most, does not exceed four ounces of meat and the same quantity of bread (sometimes damaged as not to be eatable) per man per day, and often much less, although the professed allowance is from eight to ten ounces; and that the prisoners have been treated in general (officers not excepted) with a cruelty scarce to be paralleled, and with the most studied and illiberal insult.

That it has been a common practice with the enemy, on a prisoner being first captured, to keep him three, four and even five days without a morsel of provisions of any kind, and then to tempt him to insult with the new levies in order to save his life.

That there are numerous instances of prisoners of war perishing in all the agonies of hunger, from their severe treatment.

That being generally *starved* and what elicits they have when taken, they have suffered greatly for want thereof during their confinement.

That, in the beginning of last summer, bills of exchange to the amount of £600 sterling, purchased of David Franks, British Commissary of prisoners, residing within the jurisdiction of these States, were sent into New-York for the relief of the prisoners; that every obstacle was thrown in the way to prevent the negotiation of these bills, and after a delay of two months, they were returned to Mr. Boudinot, the American Commissary of prisoners.

That the American Commissary of prisoners had permission to send in provisions from Hudson's and Raritan rivers into New-York, and to purchase clothing there for about two months past; but on this condition, that the sloop carrying the provisions stop at the man of war stationed in the mouth of Hudson's river, where the hands are taken on board of the ships, and the Agent for American prisoners in New-York is obliged to send hands from thence to take the sloop over to the city, and return her again to the man of war; which not only renders it very tedious and expensive, but prevents getting sloops for the purpose, as very few owners choose to trull their vessels in the enemy's hands, and to remain prisoners on board of the man of war till the sloop returns.

That provisions, which have been sent into the city of New-York for the subsistence of the American prisoners, have been prevented by a public ordinance from being sold at a higher rate than forty-five shillings per cwt. for flour, although the current price of that article was six pounds per cwt. and it actually sold current at that price between individuals, while the flour belonging to these States was sold at the ordinance price.

That the American officers in the power of the enemy, have not had any allowance made to them for their subsistence, although the British officers, in the power of these States, have been allowed, by a resolution of Congress, two dollars a week for their subsistence.

That in consequence of repeated remonstrances from General Washington to General Howe concerning the injurious treatment of prisoners in his power, General Howe in his letter to General Washington in November last promised "That a Commissary should be permitted to carry in a supply of clothing, money and other necessaries for the prisoners in Philadelphia, and to visit the places where they were confined."

That on a conference, which passed between Mr. Ferguson the British Commissary of prisoners, and Mr. Boudinot the Commissary of prisoners for these States, who was ordered by General Washington to visit the prisoners agreeable to General Howe's promise, Mr. Ferguson said, that he was desired by General Howe to let Mr. Boudinot know "that there could be no necessity for his coming into the city as he would see that the prisoners were properly dealt by" and Mr. Boudinot was not suffered to go in.

That on this conference, Mr. Ferguson the British Commissary of prisoners complaining of the inattention paid to the supplying of prisoners in their hands with cloaths, said "that there was plenty of clothing in Philadelphia, which we were at liberty to purchase for provisions, and to appoint Agents for that purpose" that on Mr. Boudinot's expressing his doubt on this point, Mr. Ferguson shewed great surprise at his unbelief, and assured him repeatedly that full liberty to purchase clothing would be granted.

That Mr. Ferguson, in his letter of the 2d of December, says "that permission will be given to send in clothing for our prisoners, but that General Howe does not think fit to allow it to be purchased in Philadelphia."

Congress

\* Major Williams lately exchanged, mentions particularly the following names, whose names he recollects, Col. Ethan Allen, Major Bain, Captain Mahan, Lieutenant Siboli, Sergeant Langsdorf, Lieutenant Binner, & several others.



Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:384. The following letter of recommendation to Adams from William Ellery in behalf of the son of William Vernon, dated "York Town Jany. 22d. 1778," is in the Adams Papers, MHi.

"I received a few days since a Letter from my good friend William Vernon Esqr., One of the members of the Navy Board in the Eastern department; in which he informed me that he was about to send his son, William, to France; with the View of placing him in a good, reputable, mercantile house; either in Nantz, Bourdeaux or Rochelle, and desired that I would obtain Letters recommendatory of him to the honorable Commissioners at the Court of France.

"It would give me great pleasure to oblige both the father and the son, and I know no way in which I could do it so effectually, if I should be so happy, as by introducing him to your favorable notice and attention.

"I remember Horace's caution; but I think I run no other hazard in recommending young Mr. Vernon to your notice, but that of being refused a favour, which I acknowledge I have but small pretensions to ask: A hazard which I hope you will think me excuseable in running for the sake of serving a friend.

"He was educated at Jersey College, and at the last commencement proceeded Batchelor of Arts. I have inquired into his Character of President Witherspoon and Professor Houston, who was late Dep. Secretary of Congress. They both speak well of his morals and behaviour while he was at college. I have some acquaintance with him, and think that he is an amiable Youth. If he should have the honour of going a passenger in the Ship that carries you, you will have an opportunity of knowing him thoroughly before you reach your destined post."

<sup>2</sup> For Congress' January 21 resolves on the treatment of prisoners of war, see *JCC*, 10:74-81.

<sup>3</sup> See *JCC*, 10:81-82. On the preparation of the "manifesto," which Congress did not finally adopt until October 30, 1778, see also Gouverneur Morris to Robert R. Livingston, August 17, 1778; and *JCC*, 12:1080-82.

## Joseph Jones to George Washington

Dr. Sr.

Wmsburg 22d Janry 1778

On my return to Congress I found the speakers Letter informing me my resignation was accepted by the House of Delegates and that I might as soon as I pleased return home which I did after staying abt. a week to put the Business we had been sent upon to Camp in a proper train, the Issue of which I had then every reason to expect woud. be according to the wishes of the Army but what the event has been I have not yet been informed.<sup>1</sup> Many reasons pressed me to retire from Congress and if I felt a concern it was only that in case I continued I might possibly be of some use in obstructing or endeavouring at best to prevent the mischevous consequences of those base Arts and machinations that are but too prevalent among some people and which it is the Duty of every good Man to resent and suppress. I knew not so much of these matters before I went to Camp as I discovered there, and after my return; for it was on my return only that I had the first intimation given me of the conduct and language of a certain popular Pennsylvanian lately appointed to the New Board of War—of the disposition and Temper of another Gentleman of that Board whose name the fortunate events of last fall hath

greatly exalted, I had before heard.<sup>2</sup> But whatever may be the design of these Men, and however artfully conducted, I have no doubt but in the end it will rebound to their own disgrace. You stand too high in the public opinion to be easily reached by their attempts and the same equal and disinterested Conduct, the same labour and attention, which you have manifested in the public service from the first of Contest, will shield and protect you from the shafts of Envy and malevolence. There may be instances, and these your good sense will point out to you, which require your Notice and the public welfare may be injured if passed over in silence, but in all other respects such petty Larceny attacks as these may be called deserve, as they will ever meet with, your Contempt. Two thousand men are ordered to be drafted to fill up our Battalions, and five thousand Volunteers raised to join you, and serve for six months, also a state Battalion in the room of Mathews's taken by the Enemy, and the Counties where draughts were deficient the last fall are ordered to make them good besides their proportion of the new levy. Colo. Braxton has a Letter of the 17th last month from Capt Chamberlain in one of the French Islands informing him that 6000 French Troops were there in the pay of Spain, that abt. the like number were daily expected, that the Spaniards had at Hispaniola abt. 10,000 Men & 12 Ships of the line, and it was imagined by some they meditated an attack upon Jamaica. Mr. Chamberlain may be as I suspect he is equally sanguine with Mr. Bingham. Every exertion is made use of to get a supply of provisions for the Army. We are this day to choose a Deligate to Congress to serve from 10th of May to 11th Augt. as R.H. Lee was chosen only to that time, and as some think he ought not to be longer continued as he will then have served three years, it is uncertain wh[ether] he will be chosen.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Mercer is the other Gentleman proposed. I am sorry to hear it is probable the Enemy have got possession of Mr. Pleasants portmantue as there were Letters of Col. Harrisons to you and myself in it, and containing some things I shod. wish them not to know.

Having left my chaise with Greentree in the City to be sold, and not having been able yet to provide myself with such a one as woud. suit me, I am obliged to make use of your Carriage untill I do. I shall send it to Mt. Vernon as soon after I am provided as lies in my power. As I am pretty confident I could rely on Col. Bannister<sup>4</sup> and Mr. Harvie respecting the conduct and Secrecy of any Business I shod. mention to them it may perhaps be in my power to be usefull to my Country by Communications to them of any matter you may think necessary and which you may Conceive to have been neglected or not duly attended to. In this or any other matters wherein I may possibly be usefull pray exercise your pleasure with freedom. With Compliments to your worthy Family I am, Dr Sr. yr. aff. hum Servt.

Jos. Jones

P.S. The Letters you delivered the Com. were called for by Congress<sup>5</sup>—being in my possession they were by order of Congress delivered. How the Members got information the Letters were in our custody I know not unless from Mr. G——y<sup>6</sup> as he and myself were the only persons of the Com. in Town and I never mentd. them to any person—but he as a Member of the Com. wanted them to be referred to in the Report & of course produced.

RC (DLC).

<sup>1</sup> For Congress' response to the recommendations of this committee, see Committee at Headquarters to George Washington, December 10, 1777, note. On Jones' departure from Congress, see John Harvie to Thomas Jefferson, December 29, 1777, note 3.

<sup>2</sup> Jones is alluding to Thomas Mifflin and Horatio Gates. For a discussion of Washington's critics during this fateful period, see James Lovell to Horatio Gates, November 27, 1777, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> On January 23 the Virginia Assembly selected Richard Henry Lee by a wide margin over James Mercer to continue in the seat he was currently holding until the usual August end of the term. It is also worth noting that Jones was appointed a judge of the Virginia General Court on January 23. *Journal of the House of Delegates of Virginia* (Williamsburg: Printed by Alexander Purdie, 1778), pp. 136–37.

<sup>4</sup> John Banister had been appointed to the Virginia congressional delegation on November 19, 1777, but he did not arrive in York until March 16, 1778. *Ibid.*, p. 35; and *JCC*, 10:258.

<sup>5</sup> On December 19 Congress had asked to see the letters that Washington had lent the committee at headquarters, which contained the opinions of several general officers respecting a winter's campaign and winter quarters. *JCC*, 9:1035.

<sup>6</sup> Elbridge Gerry.

## Henry Laurens to John Adams

Sir, York Town 22d Jany. 1778

On the 19th Inst. I had the honor of receiving & presenting to Congress, your favor of the 23d Ultimo, the Contents of which afforded great satisfaction to the House.<sup>1</sup> It is now the wish of every freind to American Independence to learn speedily of your safe arrival at the Court of Versailles, where your sagacity, vigilance, integrity & knowledge of American affairs are extremely wanted for promoting the Interest of these Infant States. You are so well acquainted with our present Representation in that part of Europe & with the delays & misfortunes under which we have suffered as renders it unnecessary to attempt particular intimations.

Inclosed you will find an Act of the 8th Inst. for suspending the embarkation of General Burgoyne & his Troops. Mr. Lovel has very fully advised you on that subject by the present opportunity, permit me to add that I have it exceedingly at heart, from a persuasion of



the rectitude & justifiableness of the measure, to be in the Van of the British Ministry & their Emissaries at every Court in Europe.

Baron Holzendorff presents his best Compliments & requests your care of the Inclosed Letter directed to his Lady. If I can possibly redeem time enough for writing to my family & freinds in England I will take the Liberty by the next Messenger to trouble you with a small Packet, hither all private considerations have been overruled by a constant attention to business of more importance, I mean since the first of November.<sup>2</sup>

I have the honour to be with great Regard & Esteem, Sir, Your most obedient & most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> This was the letter in which Adams informed Congress that he was accepting election as the American commissioner to France in place of Silas Deane. Wharton, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2:458.

<sup>2</sup> The date of Laurens' election as president of Congress.

## Henry Laurens to George Clinton

Sir.

York Town 22 January 1778

I beg leave to refer to the last which I had the honour of writing to Your Excellency under the 14th Inst. since which Your Excellency's favor of the 31st Ult. with duplicate of the 20th came to hand. I presented them immediately to Congress & both were referred to the Board of War from whence no Report is yet come up.<sup>1</sup>

Please to receive under the present Cover an Act of Congress of the 29th December for bringing to punishment, when practicable, such of the Inhabitants of these States, as have joined or shall join the Enemy. The transmission of this Act at so late a day is owing to an oversight in the Secretary's Office which Your Excellency will be pleased to excuse.<sup>2</sup>

I am with great Regard, Sir, Your Excellency's Most humble servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Governor Clinton's December 20 and 31 letters are in PCC, item 67, 2:94-95, 98-99. In the latter he informed Laurens that in consequence of a December 9 congressional resolution "an additional Member is ordered to give his immediate Attendance at Congress." See also *JCC*, 9:1013.

<sup>2</sup> This day Laurens also enclosed this "Act"—which was in fact passed on December 30—with brief letters that he wrote to Gov. Nicholas Cooke of Rhode Island and President Meshech Weare of New Hampshire. PCC, item 13, fols. 148-49.

## Henry Laurens to John Ettwein

Reverend & Dear sir,<sup>1</sup>

York Town 22d January 1778.

The perusal of your very affecting Letter under the 15th Inst.<sup>2</sup> which I received only this Evening, drew tears from my Heart, & I am the more anxious on your Account because I perceive it not much in my power to relieve you, but this you may rely on, I will do every thing I can for that purpose, I have but a moment as it were to write, but I would not miss the very first opportunity to disclose my feelings for your suffering Society. The best present advice I can give is to Represent your Case in a Memorial & Petition, or call it an humble Representation, to the State of Pennsylvania & to Congress.<sup>3</sup> Redress must flow from the former. The Latter may & I hope will in some measure interpose on your behalf. I will not fail to engage some of the Members in your favor. I know many of them were disposed to shew you every proof of their good will when we were at Bethlehem,<sup>4</sup> but unfortunately the most valuable of these are now absent. Excuse this very hasty address. I have told you why more leisure had not been taken & beleive that I Love & Esteem your self my Dear Sir & your Brethren whom I beleive to be the sincere disciples of our common Saviour more than I can express. Beleive me that as an Individual I am heartily inclined to do everything to serve you that you would attempt to require.<sup>5</sup> I am with true affection & Esteem, Reverend Sir Your faithful Servant,

Henry Laurens

RC (PBMCA).

<sup>1</sup> John Ettwein (1721–1802), leader of the Moravian settlement at Bethlehem, Pa., and longtime friend of Laurens, became bishop of the Moravian Church in North America in 1784. *DAB*. For his relationship with Laurens, with whom he began a correspondence in 1761, see Henry Laurens, *The Papers of Henry Laurens*, ed. Philip M. Hamer et al. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1968–), 3:56, passim.

<sup>2</sup> In this letter Ettwein, who was currently serving as voluntary chaplain to the Continental hospital in Bethlehem, described the legal penalties to which the state of Pennsylvania subjected Moravians because of their refusal to bear arms or abjure their allegiance to the king and wondered if Congress might not “grant them a Protection for their Persons & Property until a final Settlement between England & America is effected.” Kenneth G. Hamilton, *John Ettwein and the Moravian Church during the Revolutionary Period* (Bethlehem, Pa.: Times Publishing Co., 1940), pp. 181–83.

<sup>3</sup> For the unsuccessful outcome of Moravian efforts to follow Laurens’ advice, see Laurens to Ettwein, May 16, 1778.

<sup>4</sup> See the Delegates’ Testimonial for the Bethlehem Moravians, September 22, 1777.

<sup>5</sup> Ettwein’s January 29 reply to Laurens is in Hamilton, *John Ettwein*, p. 184.

## Henry Laurens to William Heath

Sir,

York Town 22d January 1778

After I had closed my Letter which will accompany this, under yesterday's date, Messenger Jones brought in your favours of the 6th & 8th Inst. which together with the Correspondence with General Burgoyne I presented to Congress this Morning.<sup>1</sup> The House appeared to be pleased with your conduct in every respect relative to that Officer.

I detained the bearer hereof one day in order to know the determination of Congress on your very alarming Calls for Money & I have received direction to refer you to a Letter which I writ the 14th Inst. to Mr. Hancock D.P.g. in the Eastern department advising of 350,000 Dollars ordered to be transmitted to him by the Board of War from which Sum you may draw for present relief. I am indeed extremely sorry to find that Money is not yet gone forward, but it will go tomorrow—and you may expect a further considerable Sum will follow in a few days. At present the demand of the Pay Master general for arrears of the Army at Valley forge has gleaned the Treasury, but from Loans & other means it will speedily be replenished & you may depend upon me Sir to remind the Board of your pressing necessities.

I have the honour to be, With very great Respect, Sir, Your most humble servant, Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (MH).

<sup>1</sup> General Heath's January 6 and 8 letters to President Laurens, which dealt with problems arising from the Saratoga Convention, are in PCC, item 54, fols. 113-14, item 157, fols. 65-68.

## Henry Laurens to Baron de Kalb

Dear Sir,

22 Jany 1778

The 19th Inst. I was honoured by the receipt of your favor of the 7th which is now in view.<sup>1</sup>

It must be exceedingly mortifying to be so long a time as you have described without intelligence from our nearest freinds & the more so when there is reason to beleive the failure owing to villainous interception, but mortifying as it is, we know it to be no uncommon thing in time of War, we must by every prudent means endeavour to guard against miscarriages, when they happen we must submit. I have had Some experience in disappointments of this kind.

You are exceedingly welcome my Dear General to make use of me either for the purpose of conveying or receiving your Letters. You may depend upon my attention & fidelity.



I think it more probable your Letters have been arrested on the other side the Atlantic than upon this. Congress received a few days ago a large Packet containing blank paper; a genuine packet had been Stolen at Nantz & this Counterfeit put in the place. Mr. Lee was played exactly the Same kind of trick & I have a Letter this Evening from Mr. Morris complaining of the loss of one of his packets from France. I have not the least doubt but that I have lost half a dozen.

I think myself as an American Interested in the safe conveyance of your public dispatches, because I am persuaded they are intended to procure benefits for my Country, but public or private when you commit any to my care I will forward them by such means as will keep them free from every risque but that of Capture at Sea.

You write nothing unimportant—every thing you write should therefore be forwarded under quadruple transcripts at least—if you send so many Copies for instance to Mr. Adams & request him to take one with himself & to send three by so many different conveyances directed to the protection of our Commissioners at Paris, or perhaps better to a friend at the French Court—there will be little ground to fear the loss of all of them.

I presented all the latter part of your Letter to Congress, your remarks & opinions on the State of the Army were received with Satisfaction. Most of the Evils complained of arise from measures adopted by the State, out of the province of Congress, nevertheless as the Legislature are convinced of their errors in the former Militia arrangements tis probable they will attempt to pursue a wiser Course, Congress have interposed so far as to recommend an alteration,<sup>2</sup> and I trust proper regard will be paid to their opinion.

No doubt it is “painful to you,” to see Orders slighted but can one forbear asking this Question—whose fault is it? or giving this answer—the fault of the inferior Officers *the first time*.

It is “discouraging & fatiguing” & I may add disgusting to a Man of Spirit accustomed to discipline & punctuality to be a daily Witness of such irregularities as those you have marked. I feel pain even from thinking of such bane to good Service. If the General has a fault it is that which everyone who love & respect him Speaks of, but it should be remarked if he has that fault it is a very pernicious one, it is attended by a train of evil consequences which may prove the ruin of the Army & of the Cause for the Support of which he is sacrificing all domestic enjoyments & risking his Life. Were I near him in Rank & in the Army & convinced of his oversight in the particulars you allude to, Irksome & even dangerous as the attempt might be, I would find words, void of offence, for giving a proper alarm. This is a delicate Subject & I speak only hypothetically. I know not where the mistake begins.

You will have seen Dear Sir, the Resolutions of Congress, for suspending the embarkation of Lieutt. General Burgoyne & his

Troops—and the Report of the Committee upon which those Resolves are founded. If I do not ask too much let me intreat your sentiments—will the Courts in Europe acknowledge our Act to be founded in Justice & good policy?

Dear Baron, I am with the utmost Regard

[P.S.] I make no apology for a Letter hastily performed at 10 oClock at Night after a fatiguing days attendance in Congress &ca &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> There is an extract of this letter in Friedrich Kapp, *The Life of John Kalb, Major-General in the Revolutionary Army* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1884), pp. 144–45.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps a reference to the December 31 resolution asking the states “to suspend filling up any vacancies in their respective regiments, until they shall hear further from Congress on the subject.” See *JCC*, 9:1073.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir,

22d Jany 1778

The 19th Inst. I was honoured by the Receipt of your favor of the 16th<sup>1</sup> by the hands of a French Gentleman whose name you have omitted & I have not seen him since he brought me the Letter. Be assured Sir, it will afford me the highest satisfaction to serve you effectually in all your Commands & yet I almost despair of Succeeding in the present trifle, for it seems by Mr. Duplessis report the Gentleman would be content with a Lieutenancy but you Sir are now a better judge of the State of our Army than I am. I learn however from all quarters, there are very many supernumerary Subalterns, a certain number of these I apprehend will be reduced. There could never be a more improper juncture for applying for new Commissions. In this view I feel my self unhappy because I cannot do all that I wish. Nevertheless my endeavours shall not be wanting to give a lift to this Young Soldier, I have just sent to seek him in order to offer at least, my countenance, & in a word Sir, I will make him a witness of my gratitude to Marquis delafayette for his friendship to my Country.

The Committee appointed to confer with His Excellency the Commander in Chief in Camp, are now Stripped of all their intended Military Coadjutors & will consist of Members of Congress. Perhaps I ought to except Colonel Reed who is at the same time a Member of Congress & a Military Man. General Gates, General Mifflin & Colonel Pickering are called to attend the duties of the appointment at the Board of War. An application to that Committee will be as likely a measure for obtaining employment for the Young Gentleman as

any I can think of, but it is much against him that he speaks not a word of English.

P.M. Just returned from Congress, where a Report was made from the Board of War making out a Seperate Command for Major General Marquis delafayette. This will undergo debate this Evening & probably you will very soon receive minute information from the Board of War or from the President of Congress. If the plan is Resolved upon the Young Gentleman in view will be provided for.<sup>2</sup>

I continue in the the most sincere Esteem & Respt.<sup>3</sup>

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens is probably referring to Lafayette's January 15 letter to him. See Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:237-38.

<sup>2</sup> This day Congress resolved that "an irruption be made into Canada" and the next day appointed Lafayette commander of the projected expedition, with Gens. Thomas Conway and John Stark as his second and third in command. This project was largely the work of Gen. Horatio Gates, the president of the new Board of War, who had been meditating an assault on Canada since November. As for the specific objects of the expedition, Gates instructed Lafayette on January 31 that he was "to destroy, or possess the Enemys Vessels and Stores of every kind upon Lake Champlain and in the City of Montreal, and all Clothing and Stores of every kind, in the possession of private Persons, which may be necessary for the Service of the States, or Serviceable to the Enemy," to encourage the enlistment of Canadians in the Continental Army, and, if conditions seemed propitious, to secure the adhesion of Canada to the Confederation. Unfortunately for the American cause, Lafayette discovered almost as soon as he arrived in Albany to take up his command that, contrary to the assurances of the Board of War, there were not enough men, money, or supplies on hand to carry out a significant attack against Canada. At the same time the Committee at Camp let Congress know that it considered a Canadian expedition a foolish diversion of resources from the main military task at hand—the defeat of Howe's army in Philadelphia. After taking these factors into consideration, Congress decided on March 2 "to suspend for the present the intended irruption" into Canada, thus bringing this ill-fated enterprise to a conclusion. See *JCC*, 10:84-85, 87, 107, 172, 190-91, 216-17; Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:249-50, 263-67, 295-311; Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, February 11, 1778; and Justin H. Smith, *Our Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony: Canada and the American Revolution*, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), 2:471-514.

The abortive Canadian expedition was almost as productive of political misunderstandings as military failure. Washington and his supporters in the army were offended by the failure of Congress and the Board of War to consult him about the enterprise beforehand. Lafayette refused to accept Conway, Washington's known adversary, as his second in command and successfully maneuvered to have him replaced by Baron de Kalb. Nevertheless, there is no convincing evidence in the letters of the delegates to suggest, as some scholars have done, that the Canadian expedition was a subtle plot by an anti-Washington clique in Congress and the Board of War to detach Lafayette from Washington and thereby undermine the commander in chief. All previous Canadian expeditions had been commanded by officers independent of Washington; Lafayette's and Conway's French nationality was naturally expected to impress the Canadians; and Conway's appointment can be construed as an honest effort by Congress to rid Washington of an officer he obviously disliked. More-



over, it does not follow that had Lafayette been successful a Canadian victory would have worked to the disadvantage of his cherished friend Washington. See, in addition to the work by Smith cited above, Louis Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), pp. 110-27; and Paul D. Nelson, *General Horatio Gates* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), pp. 171-77.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter to Lafayette this day "transmitting an Act of Congress of this date for payment of your Aids de Camp in the usual mode of the Army." PCC, item 13, fol. 149; and JCC, 10:84.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear Son, York Town 22d Jany. 1778

Your friend & fellow Soldier Duplessis leaves York Town with a heart full of happiness as yours & mine used to be when Mr. Staytape had brought home the New Coat—he will tell you every thing.

More time will be required for me to consider the propriety of your scheme for raising a black Regiment, than you seem to have taken for concerting the project. There is nothing reasonable, which you can ask & I refuse. I will not refuse this, if after mature deliberation you will say it is reasonable. But before you can mature such a Plan many considerations are to be had which I am persuaded have not yet taken place in your mind. A Work of this importance must be entered upon with Caution & great circumspection, otherwise a Man will be reduced to the ridiculous state of the Fox who had lost his Tail.<sup>1</sup>

This is a very serious & important affair which shall have every proper degree of respect paid to it in my future contemplations & we will determine when we meet. I will close the subject at present by a frank declaration that I am more inclined to give than to leave you an Estate. It cuts me deep when I allow my self to think the chance for the later is rather against me.

Congress last Night confirmed an Act consisting of much recital & many Resolutions, calculated for retaliating the Injuries & Insults offered by the Enemy to the Inhabitants of these States when made prisoners.<sup>2</sup> This when the Secretary's Clerks are pleased to Copy will be transmitted & published in your Camp.

My dear Son I pray God to keep you. Henry Laurens

RC (SchI).

<sup>1</sup> John Laurens' proposal for raising a regiment of black slaves is contained in his January 14 letter to his father. Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 108-9. The history of this plan is the primary subject of Pete Maslowski, "National Policy toward the Use of Black Troops in the Revolution," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 73 (January 1972): 1-17.

<sup>2</sup> See JCC, 10:74-82.

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir, 22d Jany 1778.

Since my last of the 19th Inst. per Messenger Ness I have received Your Excellency's several favours of the 12th & 13th.

The former is Committed to the Marine Committee, from whence I understand a Report will be delivered, this day or to morrow.<sup>1</sup>

Monsieur Duplessis who will be the bearer of this & also of two hundred & fifty signed Commissions which he is so good as to take charge of returns to the Army well Satisfied, having through your Excellency's representation of his vigilance, skill & valour obtained a Brevet to Rank Lieutt. Colonel in the Artillery of the Army from the 26th November last. To the Brevet is annexed a testimonial of his singular merit. These, I judge from his own expressions of pleasure, comprehend all the wishes he brought into York Town.

Your Excellency will find inclosed an Act of Congress of the 19th Inst. for regulating the pay & Rations of Officers made prisoners by the Enemy<sup>2</sup> and another Act of the 20th for exempting the Members of the Board of War who were appointed of a Committee to confer with your Excellency in Camp from attendance of that Duty & for appointing two more Members of Congress for that purpose.<sup>3</sup>

I have the honour to be with the utmost &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Washington's January 12 and 13 letters to Laurens are in PCC, item 152, 5:263-65, 271-72, and Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:294-95, 303-4. On January 20 Congress referred to the Marine Committee the former letter and a January 17 letter from Gen. William Smallwood, both of which raised questions about the distribution of prize shares in the case of an enemy ship captured by a unit of the Continental Army. The Marine Committee's January 24 report on this issue, which arose as a result of the recent capture of a British brig in the Delaware by General Smallwood's men, is in *JCC*, 10:88. See also *JCC*, 8:66; and PCC, item 161, fols. 139-40.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens also advised Deputy Paymasters Ebenezer Hancock, Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., and Benjamin Harrison, Jr., of this "Act" in brief letters that he wrote to them on January 21, 22, and 24 respectively. PCC, item 13, fols. 145, 148, 154; and *JCC*, 10:61-62.

<sup>3</sup> Laurens informed board members Thomas Mifflin, Timothy Pickering, and Joseph Trumbull of this "Act" in brief letters that he wrote to each of them this day. PCC, item 13, fols. 145-47; and *JCC*, 10:67.

## James Lovell to Samuel Adams

Dear Sir Janry. 22d. 1778.

I fear that, upon the recommendation passed some time ago to the states to seize necessities for the army, our own state will exert itself while almost every other shirks.<sup>1</sup> Jersey & Maryland acknowledge the

receipt of the Recommendations, with many objections. In short it was a measure founded in very horrid descriptions of the miseries of the army and of the abominations of monopolizers & speculators. I think a supply may be gained by other means. I was ever afraid it would discourage trade too much. I hope it will have a fair debate in the Assembly of our state. But I do not wish that the Massachusetts should like Maryland tell us that Salt is in plenty to be purchased at £15 per Bushell & recommend that we should rather buy 1000 Bushels at that than seize at £8.<sup>2</sup> What shall we come to at such a rate of purchasing? The demands upon the Treasury are horrendous. I hope our currency will *speedily* mend, but there is a *now* to be attended to. I hope to see a proper spirit in the eastern states to support the grand contest with Britain but I do not think they ought to bear a ten fold burden. A report is to be made next Monday respecting the Evacuation of Ty—— &c. I cannot tell yet what materials it is to be made out of, but will set about it as soon as this Express is sent away. We shall have *full* 17 members o'Monday, unlucky number!

Pray get a supplement to the 7th delegate<sup>3</sup> & hurry *him* on, at least, if you cannot persuade two others to come with him. My Cloaths are dropping off my back tho I see a [tailor?] weekly, and you know that Linnen & hose are not mended tho my Lady of the Tub demands 10/ per doz. When therefore you have undergone the necessary repairs yourself I think conscience will call upon you loudly to consider the York Town Sufferers. Even you who have had a long term of drudgery must not demand more than 90 days of refreshment.

I am now at Evening & have just received your favor of the 5th. I find you & your Neighbours were in all the inquisitive just fretfulness which has long agitated many of us in this quarter. I have said enough to you in my former scrawls upon this Topic. I quit it, only giving you a wish which has *strangely* forced itself upon me this moment—that the Election of our General Officers had been made annual.

We yesterday determined upon the plan of Retaliation which is too lengthy for me to copy; it will be printed immediately.<sup>4</sup> I think I have told you that the Members of the new board of war who were to go to camp are found *necessary* here, which is the reason others have been chosen in their stead—Mr. Carryl & Govr. Morris—but I left out ostensible before reason. It is best as it will now be managed. The tale is too long or I would tell you the why & the wherefore.

(Bingham) writes Decr. 3d<sup>5</sup> that “3 Divisions of troops have *already* arrived amounting to 7,000.” 6,500 of which are to remain at Martinique, tho’ “2000 are sufficient to garrison it, this certainly is an unequivocal argument of hostile intentions.” “22 Ships of the Line besides Frigates will sail together from the Havannah with more than 15 millions Sterling in the month of December.”<sup>6</sup>



RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> On December 20 Congress had made several recommendations to the states to adopt laws authorizing seizure of needed supplies for the military. See *JCC*, 9:1042-47. See also Henry Laurens to the States, December 23, 1777.

<sup>2</sup> For further information on Gov. Thomas Johnson's offer to sell salt to the continent, see Henry Laurens to Johnson, January 12, 1778, note.

<sup>3</sup> Lovell was seventh and last of the delegates listed in the Massachusetts credentials adopted December 4, 1777. See *JCC*, 10:10.

<sup>4</sup> See Daniel Roberdeau to John Adams, January 21, 1778, notes 2 and 3. Lovell was a member of the committee appointed on January 21 to prepare a "manifesto on the injurious treatment our prisoners and faithful citizens receive from the enemy."

<sup>5</sup> William Bingham's December 3, 1777, letter to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, is in *PCC*, item 90, fols. 13-20.

<sup>6</sup> Remainder of MS missing.

## Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board

Gentlemen

January 22d. 1778

As that part of the Continental Navy late in the Delaware are either lost or rendered useless, there appears no necessity of your continuing in Jersey. We therefore request your removal to Baltimore giving us notice when you Arrive.<sup>1</sup>

If you should think it necessary one of your Board may remain at Bordenton for a Short time, the expediency of which you will be able to judge, and if necessary you'l Agree among yourselves upon the person to remain. If Mr. Nixon should not be with you on receipt of this, you will be pleased to give him notice that the place of residence of the Navy Board is by our direction to be at Baltimore and that we expect his attendance.

We are Gent, Yr hble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> It is not known exactly when this board moved from Bordentown, N.J., to Baltimore, Md., but probably not before mid-April. See Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board, April 8, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to William Palfrey

Sir,

York Town 23d January 1778.

I received & presented immediately to Congress Your Letter of yesterday, & Directions were immediately given to the Treasury Committee to supply you without delay, with a Sum of Money sufficient for the present demands of the Army at Valley forge.<sup>1</sup>

Inclosed you will find an Act of Congress of the 19th regulating the

Pay & Rations of Officers who have been or may be Captured by the Enemy.

And another Act of the 22d directing to Pay the Aids de Camp of the Marquis delafayette according to their Rank &ca.

I am with great Regard, Sir, Your most obedient servant,  
Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> Congress read Paymaster General Palfrey's January 9 letter on the 10th, referred it to the Board of Treasury, and agreed on the 14th to provide him with \$500,000. See *JCC*, 10:38-39, 52. Palfrey's letter is not in *PCC*.

## John Harvie and Gouverneur Morris to the Pennsylvania Council

Lancaster 24th January 1778.<sup>1</sup>

The State of Pennsylvania having determined by a Law of that State to regulate the Charges of their Publicans, and General Washington having by his Passport directed that every thing should be furnished to the Gentlemen mentioned therein at the most reasonable Rates, they paying therefor in Specie, and to adjust such Rates, having referred them to the Law of this State, it appears to us that Disputes upon this Subject are to be determined by Congress only, seeing that no single State ought of Right to interfere in Compacts which affect the public Faith and honor of the Confederacy; altho the Laws of Pennsylvania may direct that no Person shall sell any thing at a less Price for Gold or Silver than in Continental Money; yet if this Law is to be supposed binding in Matters which regard the United States and Foreign Powers, the equitable Interpretation seems to be, that the Price in Paper Money should be reduced, and not the Price in Specie encreased. Upon the whole it is requested that one of the Gentlemen mentioned in the Passport may be permitted to wait upon Congress under a proper Escort to obtain their Determination.

John Harvie

Gouv. Morris

Tr (DLC). This letter forms part of a larger document prepared for Gen. William Howe, who sent it to General Washington with a February 21, 1778, letter complaining of the treatment that a relief party of his officers had received in Pennsylvania as they sought to attend British and Hessian prisoners of war. *PCC*, item 152, 5:327-40. The document in question is endorsed: "Extract of a Report from Mr. Thomas Sandford Quarter Master of the Brigade of Guards." Sandford was a member of the British party. Another copy of the letter, in the hand of Henry Laurens and endorsed "Copy of a paper without any direction handed to me by Capt. Wilson & Lieutt. Patterson—24th Jany

1778—T[imoth]y Matlack, Secry.," is in the Laurens Papers, ScHi. Gouverneur Morris stated that he was the author of the letter when he wrote to Pres. Joseph Reed of Pennsylvania on April 9, 1779, explaining his role in the controversy that it touched off.

<sup>1</sup>On January 21 a British and Hessian party, carrying passports from General Washington permitting them to deliver clothing, supplies, and medical assistance to British prisoners in Reading and Hessian prisoners in Virginia, stayed at the house of "Mr. Herbert, Inn keeper," in Lancaster and paid £2.0.9 in specie for food and drink. Because they paid their bill in hard money, Herbert charged his guests less than the rates specified in a recent Pennsylvania law establishing prices for articles bought with paper money. News of this transgression was almost immediately brought to the attention of the Pennsylvania Council, which was sitting at Lancaster, and on January 23 the council ordered Herbert to charge the rates required by law. The innkeeper complied with this order and submitted a bill for £4.14.0 to the British and Hessians, which caused them to complain of unfair treatment. At this point Harvie and Morris, who were passing through Lancaster on their way to join the committee at camp at Valley Forge, were approached by Dr. Hammond Beaumont, a British surgeon of the Twenty-sixth Regiment, who sought their help. As a result, Harvie and Morris, fearful of "the Advantage which our Enemies would take of such Circumstances, and how much our national Character for Probity might be injured by their artful Representations," produced the opinion printed here suggesting that the matter "be determined by Congress." The two American officers in charge of the British and Hessian party, Capt. William Wilson and Lt. William Patterson, delivered the opinion to the Pennsylvania Council, which indignantly rejected it and reaffirmed the original order to Herbert. The council also sent the opinion to Congress, but although a number of delegates were disquieted by what they deemed unwarranted interference in Pennsylvania's internal affairs by Harvie and Morris, Congress took no formal action. Nevertheless, Harvie's and Morris' intervention was greatly resented in Pennsylvania, and as late as April 1779 Morris found it necessary to defend his behavior in the face of fresh criticism by state authorities. See *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:201-2; "Extract of a Report from Mr. Thomas Sandford," [January 1778], Washington Papers, DLC; Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton, January 26 and 30, 1778; and Gouverneur Morris to Joseph Reed, April 9, 1779.

The same British and Hessian relief party also occasioned a second altercation involving Washington, Congress, and the Board of War. After leaving Lancaster on January 24 and traveling but a few miles, the party was intercepted and sent back to Lancaster by the commanding officer there, Col. William Stephens Smith, acting under orders from the Board of War, which had been mistakenly told that Gen. William Howe had recently forbidden provisions to be sent by water to American prisoners in Philadelphia. Washington informed the board on January 26 that this intelligence was false and ordered Smith to allow the British and Hessians to proceed on their mission of mercy. Smith was unable to carry out Washington's order, however, because of the opposition of some military officers in Lancaster, who argued that only Congress or the Board of War could release the party. Foremost among this opposition was Gen. Thomas Conway, who exchanged sharp words on the issue with Lafayette when the latter defended the sanctity of Washington's passport. For its part, Congress read Washington's January 26 letter to the board on January 30 and ordered that body to conduct a full investigation. But before this inquiry could be completed the British and Hessians left Lancaster in disgust and returned to Philadelphia. See *JCC*, 10:101; *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:216, 233, 268-69; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:351-52, 355-57; and "Extract of a Report from Mr. Thomas Stanford," [January 1778], Washington Papers, DLC.

Although it may be that Conway and the Board of War were predisposed to



become involved in the matter to embarrass Washington, it is clear that one reason the relief party encountered difficulty was that two of its members were discovered to be carrying counterfeit Continental currency, which naturally gave rise to suspicions that the party had been sent behind American lines for more than humanitarian reasons. See *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:216, 268-69.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Johnson

Sir,

York Town 24 Jany 1778

My last was by Post under the 17th Inst. Your Excellency will find inclosed in this, An Act of Congress of the 19th Inst. for establishing a communication for transporting of Provisions from the Southern States for the use of the Army & for defraying the expences attending the same, together with the Commissary general's proposals to which the Act refers.<sup>1</sup>

I have likewise the honour of transmitting to Your Excellency the thanks of Congress, expressed in an Act of this date & here inclosed for the Contents of Your Excellency's favour of the 19th, which afforded the House great satisfaction. Your Excellency will perceive from the tenor of this Act that the Commissary general is directed to receive the 1350 bushels Salt therein mentioned & to purchase as much more as shall be necessary. Nothing further has been said concerning the Owners of the Salt Vessel or Cargo.<sup>2</sup>

Inclosed Your Excellency will be pleased to receive a Warrant on the Loan Office in Maryland for twenty Thousand Dollars advanced for recruiting the Continental Army in that State.<sup>3</sup>

I have the honour to be with great Regard, Sir, Your Excellency's Obedient humble servt,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (MdAA).

<sup>1</sup> Laurens also enclosed this "Act" with brief letters that he wrote this day to Govs. Patrick Henry of Virginia and Richard Caswell of North Carolina. PCC, item 13, fol. 153. Commissary General William Buchanan's "proposals" are in JCC, 10:62n2.

<sup>2</sup> See JCC, 10:87-88; *Md. Archives*, 16:469-70; and Laurens to Robert and Samuel Purviance, January 12, 1778.

<sup>3</sup> See JCC, 10:89.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir,

24th Jany. 1778.

I had the honour of writing to you by Monsr. Duplessis who left York yesterday. I find the Board of War have transmitted you the Intelligence of your appointment by Congress to a Command, to

which I shall add no opinions of my own.<sup>1</sup> If you accept it, Monrs. Sigougné will probably be provided for & therefore I have said nothing to restrain his desire of returning to Camp. I had conferred respecting him with Mr. Lovel, who promised me his aid in procur- ing a Lieutenancy for this young Gentleman, but some difficulties were started from a consideration of the arrangements intended & expected at Camp which I alluded to in my last. To keep this Gentle- man wasting his time & money in this extravagant Market would be cruel. He will learn at Camp your determination & at the Same time will have an opportunity of being presented to the Committee of Conference, therefore Sir, I have rather encouraged his inclinations to skip the Scene. I am writing with a frozen hand & the Gentleman waiting at my Elbow. Your kindness will overlook the imperfections of the present Address & believe me to be with the warmest respect &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> The Board of War's letter of this date notifying Lafayette of his ap- pointment "to the Command of an Expedition meditated against Montreal" is in Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:249-50. See also Laurens to Lafayette, January 22, 1778.

## Elbridge Gerry to John Adams

My Dear Sir

York in Pennsylvania 25th Jany 1778

I have attended to your Sentiments on the Subject of Money and am equally unhappy with You "to see Injustice, both to the publick & Individuals so frequently," but how to remedy it, "hic Labor, hoc Opus est." The Mode proposed by an Act allowing Depreciation or Appreciation on Specialties may releive a few, but I fear that it would not have a general good effect.

The comparative Value of Money appears to me to depend on three principles; the quality, the quantity, & the plenty or Scarcity of the Articles, which are generally considered as Necessaries of Life.

With Respect to the quality, it matters not much whether it is paper or Species, if a Confidence is placed in the Government, & the quantity does not exceed the Sum required for a circulating Medium. To prove this, have We not frequently seen paper in these States, preferable to Gold or Silver of the same nominal Value, as it was more portable & equally good for any other purpose within the State? True it is, that if the Government is in Danger of an Overthrow, or is supposed unable to redeem the Money, It's Value will be propor- tionably diminished, but I beleive that our Currency suffers no present Injury from either of these Causes.

But when the quantity is increased beyond it's due Bounds, whether

Species or paper, the Currency must necessarily depreciate. This is one great Cause of the Evils We now feel, & therefore We knew that by lessening the quantity, We shall find relief. Taxation is an effectual Remedy as far as it goes, but whilst the War continues, It must be assisted by others that are more extensive. Loans from the Inhabitants of the States are safe & ought to be promoted by all the Means in our Power. Whilst the Interest is to be paid in Bills of Exchange, I was in Hopes that the Citizens of America would have fully supplied the Loan offices, but find it otherwise. Surely it is not from the Want of Money, for an assertion of this Kind would be contrary to Experience: It must arise then from the present Want of Zeal or an apprehension of Individuals that they shall be Sufferers by the Measure. If the former, ought they not to be addressed by Congress & the respective States, & excited by every Argument to supply the necessary Means for supporting the War? if the latter their Fear is groundless, for it can easily be demonstrated, that the Value of the Bills of Exchange which they are to receive for their Interest, will increase in an inverse Ratio to the Depreciation of the Currency. Confiscated Estates, if the Recommendations of Congress are carried into Effect, will produce large Sums for this purpose. An Estate in Connecticut of a Refugee with the Enemy, I am credibly informed amounted before the War, to £50,000 Currency. Is not the Value enhanced since, & ought not the States without Delay to realize such Interest. We have directed the Commissioners at the Court of France & Spain to apply for a Loan of Two Millions sterling, which is to serve as a Fund on which Bills of Exchange are proposed to be drawn for sinking Part of the continental Currency. This I hope, with the Establishment of an Office to answer the Bills that shall be drawn for Payment of the Interest on Loan Office Certificates will claim the immediate Attention of the Commissioners. Let Us determine to go on & multiply the Measures for reducing the quantity until it is accomplished, & I doubt not We shall answer the purpose.

But one Thing further appears necessary, which has not hitherto met with your Concurrence, I mean, a general Regulation of prices thro the Continent; from the Want of Which the plan in N England has once miscarried. Many of the Articles imported from abroad, or captured by privateers, are necessities of Life, & in such Demand from the Scarcity as to enable the Importers & Retailers to exact from the publick exorbitant Profits. The Evil does not end here, the farmer, finding that foreign Goods are high increases the prices of produce in proportion to the highest prices of such Imports & thus the Money is depreciated excessively. Would not this be the Case if the Currency was in Specie, & there was not a greater Sum in Circulation than was necessary? Perhaps by attending to the Matter We shall find that it would, for Avarice is not to be satisfied by Gold & Silver, any more than by paper Bills. The Importer & Retailer un-



restrained by Laws, would in the one Case as well as the other, have the Inhabitants in their Power, & by their exorbitant Demands would oblige the Farmers & Manufacturers to rise in the same Proportion, in order to support themselves & Families, & thus accomplish a Depreciation. A very good Reason may be assigned for the present Difference of prices, when Articles are paid for in Gold & Silver. These have a more extensive Circulation, & the present high prices of produce renders it necessary to obtain Species for Exportation; but by reducing the quantity of paper, & curbing Extortion, the prices of produce will naturally fall & Gold & Silver will not be often wanted to send abroad, & never by Traders at Home, unless, as I said before the State is in Danger. Has not every Legislature frequently interposed & provided restraining Acts, when by some unhappy Catastrophe or other Accident, many of the necessary Articles of Life have become scarce? & if this had not been done is it not evident, that during such Scarcity, some of their Inhabitants must have been a prey to others? I am sensible, after so lengthy an Epistle that the Subject is copious, & much may be said on both Sides, but it is evident from three Years Experience of most of the States, that Trade will not so regulate itself as to reduce the excessive prices of Articles therein, but that unrestrained in every Respect, it has been attended with a great Depreciation: And we have not had any Experience to determine the Effect of a general Regulation of prices, because the partial Attempt of a few States to restrain their Inhabitants, whilst those of the other States were permitted to make enormous Fortunes, must necessarily have produced the greatest Uneasiness, & created an Opposition that was not to be withstood.

Mr Thaxter is in the Secretary's Office & is much liked, he might have had the other place which You proposed, but was fearful of residing with a Gentleman troubled with a Disorder which often discomposes the calmest Minds.<sup>1</sup> His Merit will probably soon entitle him to promotion.

The Cloathing of the Army is a Matter of great Concern, & I sincerely hope that the Commissioners will consider it as meriting their immediate Attention. When Cloth arrives, It is almost impossible in many States to find Tradesmen to make it up, & when this is accomplished, the Work is so slighted that the Cloaths are not durable. You may remember, that when the Cloathing was ordered twelve Months past, some æconomical Gentlemen urged that part of it should be sent in Cloth, & to gratify them We have probably lost a thousand or two of our bravest Men. I hope that proper persons will be appointed in France to superintend the Business of making up Cloaths for the Army, & that Cloth will not in future be sent in the peice.

I have this Day inclosed in a Letter to Mr Sproaut <sup>2</sup> the £4 which You owe him, & shall consult him on the best Method of sending

your Chest to the North River. He is at a great Distance from hence, being as I am informed at a place 30 Miles below Philadelphia on the Jersey Shore. The other Chest shall be sent by the earliest Opportunity. Have you seen his Majesty's Speech at the opening of the present Session? He appears to be in great Tribulation, & I hope to see him in greater, before the End of the next Campaign. By the Smiles of divine providence & one noble Exertion, I think We may give the coup de Grace to his project for enslaving America.

Mr Lovell has shewn me a Letter from a Lady of your Acquaintance, who appears to be much displeased with Batchelors; I cannot think she is in earnest, because they are generally devoted to the Service of a Sex, Who are not to be exceeded in Kindness. But I suspect a particular friend of her's of originating the opinion that "Batchelors are Stoics," & conclude, that is is the practice of Husbands to hide their Failings by imputing them to others. Certain it is that a Stoical Batchelor is an Inconsistency in Terms; & if our Friend supposes that her Opinion is founded in Experience, the Inference is, *that she was never acquainted with a Batchelor*. Pray give my best Respects to her, & believe me to be with the sincerest Esteem Sir, your Friend & hum serv,

E Gerry

RC (MHi).

<sup>1</sup> John Thaxter, Jr., former law clerk of John Adams, had just arrived in York with recommendations from Adams for a secretary's position with Congress. Thaxter first applied to President Laurens, but after being turned down by him Thaxter found a post in Secretary Thomson's office. See Henry Laurens to John Adams, January 15, 1778; and Adams, *Family Correspondence* (Butterfield), 2:382-84.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> Gerry is referring to Abigail Adams' December 19, 1777, letter to James Lovell, which is discussed in Lovell to John Adams, January 13, 1778, note 1.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir,

25th Jany. 1778.

I had the honour of writing to you yesterday by the hand of Monsr. Sigougné. I omitted to inform you that by a Vote of Congress, General Conway is appointed second & General Stark third in command for the intended Northern expedition.<sup>1</sup>

On the 6th December I made to you Noble Marquis very sincere promises of attention to your affairs at Salisbury, the day or the second day after that event, I was arrested by the Gout & confined to Bed, the consequence of which has been a total neglect of all my own private businesses & a mortifying delay in the execution of the abovementioned engagement. I have been able in the mean time

barely to discharge the duties of my public character, indeed I had spoken to Mr. Lovel again & relied upon him. Yesterday that Gentleman called on me & delivered a Memorandum of Monsr. Capitaine's Name & Rank & informed me he had done nothing. I will therefore Instantly set about the business & send this very day to Salisbury & will pursue such measures as I hope will prove effectual for the purposes intended.

Inclosed you will find a Letter which you sent some time ago for Mr. Pliarne. It has lain on my Table because I had expected him again in this Town & knew not precisely how to direct to him, but having learned of his death I judge it proper to return the Letter to you. I have the honour to be &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 10:87.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear son,

York Town 25 January 1778

Mr. Duplessis who went from York I beleive on Friday did me the honour to bear a Letter to you. I did not tell you then that the Marquis delafayette is offered a Command upon an intended expedition into Canada, which will seperate him from the General. There can be nothing else intended but honour to the Marquis & benefit to the Public. General Conway is voted second in Command & General Stark third.

General Conway called on me & sat an hour, he introduced the unhappy dispute subsisting with the General, & assured me there were no such words in his Letter to General Gates as those quoted by the General. This he had learned from G. Gates, he had not kept a Copy of his Letter. Pray can you explain this Mystery, but you know tis not my wish or desire to pry improperly into the affairs of other Men. This indeed may be called a Public affair & I am afraid will become very Public, but as one party has appealed to me & the freinds of the other delivered their sentiments, I have some Claim upon each to inform me truly.

By the continual passing of Officers from your Camp one would think you had all broke up for the holy days. What condition are you in? do you ever exercise your thoughts on that question, or do you go on like an honest, fearless, uninquisitive, unsuspecting Lad?

My Dear Son, I pray God give You Wisdom & protect you from Snares.

Henry Laurens

RC (ScHi).



## Henry Laurens to Matthew Locke

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>

25th Jany 1778.

Not Copied—Nine Pages of Public Intelligence.

I come now Sir, to request your kind assistance & interposition on behalf of the Marquis delafayette abovementioned.

Some time last Summer he left a French Gentleman of the name Monsr. Capitaine sick at Salisbury with a considerable part of his Baggage. A Gentleman here undertook to bring that Gentleman & the Baggage forward, but neglected it. The Marquis is greatly distressed both on Account of the Sick Gentleman & the Goods. I most earnestly request you to make an enquiry into this affair & if Monsieur Capitaine is yet at Salisbury to furnish him with means to proceed immediately to this place with all the Marquis Baggage, let him settle his Accounts & draw Bills on me for the Amount which I will pay at Sight, & I will also pay your order for the hire of a Waggon or Waggon which may be employed to bring the Baggage. The Marquis is a most excellent worthy young Noble Man, fighting in our Cause, & using his utmost endeavours to promote our Interest at the Court of France & all without pay or gratuity. He deserves to be considered & respected by every friend to these States. If I knew what Sum of Money would be necessary I would send it by Major Polk—but you may depend upon me for the immediate payment of all that has been & that shall be incurred on this Account as soon as I know the Amount. Therefore Sir, I rely upon you as a Man of kindness & benvolence to exert yourself in behalf of this worthy Stranger. I shall ever think myself obliged to you for doing so.<sup>2</sup>

The time has been shamefully lost by the Gentleman who first engaged to serve the Marquis in this affair. I beg again your endeavors to accomplish what is necessary as abovementioned. My good wishes wait on you & Mrs. Locke & upon your whole family & I am with great regard & cca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Matthew Locke (1730–1801), the owner of a large plantation near Salisbury, N.C., was a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, 1777–78, 1781–82, and the U.S. House of Representatives, 1793–99. Jethro Rumple, *A History of Rowan County, North Carolina* (Salisbury, N.C.: J.J. Brewer, 1881; reprint ed., Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1974), pp. 114–16.

<sup>2</sup> This day Laurens also wrote letters on the same subject to Michel Capitaine du Chesnoy, the French officer under discussion; Maj. William Polk, who was on his way to Salisbury; and Matthew Troy, who lived there. Laurens Papers, ScHi. See also the index in the first volume of Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), under "Capitaine du Chesnoy, Michel."

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir, 25th Jany 1778

The 22d Inst. I had the honour of writing to your Excellency by Lieut. Colo. Duplessis whose assurances induces me to beleive he has travelled as expeditiously as any of our post Riders.

Inclosed your Excellency will receive an Act of Congress of yesterday relative to the Legal distribution of prize Money arising from Captures made on the Water by detachments from the Army, & in a seperate Packet six Copies of Extracts from the Journals of Congress ordered by the said Act to be transmitted to your Excellency & General Smallwood.<sup>1</sup> I have the honour to be &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> See *JCC*, 10:88; and Laurens to Washington, January 22, 1778. Laurens also wrote a letter this day to Gen. William Smallwood at Valley Forge, transmitting the same "Act of Congress" and "Extracts from the Journals." PCC, item 13, fol. 154.

## Robert Morris to Richard Peters

*Manheim, Jany 25th. 1778.* Thanks Peters for his January 21 letter and kindly "observations respecting the affair of my Brother." Explains that "it was my Friend Gouverneur & not me," as Peters had mistakenly assumed, who had been recently appointed to the Committee at Camp after Board of War members were excused from that assignment. Responds to Peters' lament that slanders and misrepresentations were contributing to the low morale of the Continental Army.<sup>1</sup> "I am very glad you gave me an Acct. of your *Rëncountre* with Colo Morgan or Fame with her *Foul Mouth'd* Trumpet had not been Idle. The report reached Manheim with aggravated circumstances just before Your letter enabled me to do you Justice & some of your Friends here can Witness how much pleasure I took in setting that affair in its true light. I am sure you are sincere when you say you neither are nor will be concerned in any party Work, for Heavens Sake & for the sake of your Country & of Justice keep firm to that resolution, for I really think it a horrid thing that mankind shou'd ever combine to support each other in unworthy attacks on Worthy Characters. General Washington's is too well established to be easily injured, it is too important to be sported with and I think the Man or Men that dare to do it on insufficient grounds are justly obnoxious to chastizement. The General will not suffer alone in any loss of Character, his Country & his Country's Cause will inevitably suffer more or less with him. His private Character has been too long & too amiably & well supported to suffer by the Combined

Force & Arts of Malice, Envy, Hatred & detraction. But His Military Character does not so much depend on himself or his Conduct, as on the Success of his measures & therefore in my opinion, injurious Reflections on the want of Success, should be avoided by Good Men & discouraged on their first appearance amongst People of another Cast. Let us therefore withstand these attempts against the *first* Man in this *World* & unite our endeavours to procure him such Force as will enable him to shine with that Splendour he Merits. His Enemies must then hide their Heads & silently witness the Triumph of that Virtue which first excited their Envy. These are my Sentiments & these my wishes and what is in my power shall be done for the Accomplishment of them.<sup>2</sup>

"I find Doctor Shippen is called to attend Congress to defend himself against an attack made on him by Doctr Rush. It is a pity he is called from hence at this time because I observe he is much employed in the Duties of his Station and I fear our Friend Nesbitt will miss him if detained long at York. I am no judge of his Medical abilities but have always been taught to believe greatly of them, his treatment of Nesbitt has strengthened my Faith, and as I have had an opportunity of observing his Conduct in office for some time at this place, it wou'd be injustice not to give my opinion on the occasion. I have been accustomed, as probably you have too, to Consider the Doctor as too great a devotee to Conviviality for a Man of business (this probably is giving myself a Slap in the Face too) but I see him exceedingly attentive and find an anxiety in him to support his Credit & Character in the Management of the Hospitals far beyond any expectation I had, before these things came under my own observation & I account for [it] by perceiving that the Station is grateful to his ambition & pleasing to his Vanity. Therefore I do believe he has done & will do every thing in his power to preserve the Sick & Wounded Soldiery for his own Sake. If you think these opinions will be of any use to him you are at liberty to communicate them to whom you please, for as I entertain them I care not who knows it. Mrs. Morris joins me in best Compts" &c.

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> Peters had written on January 21 from York: "You will be informed that Congress have thought it most prudent considering the State of Parties at Camp to keep General Mifflin & Gates here & send you & Mr. Carroll as Commissioners to the Army. It is a Custom among some of the Gentlemen there as I am told but I know not with what Truth, to make very free with Persons in the Civil Departments & I am informed I am made of Consequence enough not to escape my share of Slander. This I did not know until the Day before yesterday when I was drawn into an unprovoked Dispute with Col. Morgan of Virginia which proceeding to the last Extremity convinced me that the Col. has little understanding & notwithstanding his Character as a Soldier by no means satisfied me of the Soundness of *his Spirit*. He told me I was spoken of at Camp as concerned in a Party against General Washington, & misconceiving



some thing I said or designedly mistaking it, offered to turn out as Champion for the General's Character. On my denying that charge & agreeing to put our Dispute upon a *personal* Footing the Col. *declined* the Matter, I mention this Matter to you lest it should be misrepresented & I desire you as a Friend if you hear anything that I am said to be concerned in inimical to General Washington that you will please to inform me as I am conscious of being concerned in no Party Transaction of any Complexion & I am determined to keep myself clear of all these dirty Matters. As to the General, I love him to a Degree of Adoration. As from my Station I must necessarily have intercourse with the Gentlemen of the Army, I cannot be of that Usefulness I otherwise may if I am marked out as an Enemy to the Army or its Commands. If any such Charge exists it is the most villainous of all Falsehoods. I have my opinions of Men & Measures & shall speak them with Decency & without personal Reflexions. But I have no Views but to serve my Country & am willing to put the Matter to any Test with any one who has the Cruelty & Illiberality, to suspect me." Extract in *Stan V. Henkels Catalog*. No. 1183 (January 16, 1917), item 197.

<sup>2</sup> Apparently Morris had already expressed similar sentiments to Benjamin Harrison, for in a February 19 letter acknowledging receipt of a January 8 letter from Morris, Harrison offered the following observations on both Washington's congressional critics and the pernicious influence of the Board of War. "It gives one great pain to be certainly inform'd that there are some in the Senate who dislike our General. I have long suspected it, nay I something more than suspect it, but had my hopes that his continued Labours, and the situation he has ever been in, of always being inferiour to the Enemy in numbers, and his men in want of every necessary, circumstances well known to Congress, would in the end have made every man his friend, and have satisfied them that more than he has done would not have been done by any man, and that we have no one that could in any degree have equal'd him; I am as confident of this as I am of my existence that the favorite of the Day is as far inferiour to him, as he is inferiour to any officer in the army, and this truth America will experience to her cost, if ever he should be placed at the head of her armies, certain I am of one thing, that if this measure takes place a great part of the strength of this Country will be immediately taken off.

"The General is fully inform'd of all these Cabals, they prey on his Constitution, sink his Spirits, and will in the end I fear prove fatal to him, if this should be the case excuse me for once more repeating it, America, will loose perhaps her only prop. He well knows bad consequences would follow his resignation, or he would not leave it in the power of the wicked and designing, thus to insult him, with a few words more I shall finish this painful Subject, *Be Ware of your Board of War.*" *Ibid.*, item 26.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir

York Town 26 January 1778

Congress having taken under consideration the Contents of Your Letter of the 24th have ordered that Ten Thousand Dollars be advanced to the Board of War for Contingent expences, & inclosed herein you will find the Act for that purpose.<sup>1</sup> If you will be pleased to direct the Dep. secretary or any other person to call on me to morrow, I will give a Warrant for that sum.

I am with great respect, Sir, Your most obedient humble servant,  
Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (NHi). Addressed: "The Honorable Major General Gates, President of the Board of War."

<sup>1</sup> General Gates' January 24 letter, which argued that the "frequent Demands made, at this Board, for the necessary and contingent services of the Army, render it absolutely requisite that either the Treasury should answer such Warrants as the President of this Board may be advised to draw, or that a Deputy Pay Master General be immediately appointed for that Purpose," is in PCC, item 147, 1:453. See also JCC, 10:92.

## Henry Laurens to Isaac Motte

Dear Sir,<sup>1</sup>

26th Jany 1778.

Your favour of the 18th November found me arrested & confined in Bed by a very severe Gout—the heaviest attack I had ever felt. I had no hopes of walking again with any degree of Strength till the warm weather should have releived me, but having my mind full of business, & an anxious desire that our State should be represented, however lamely, without stooping the Idea to a pun which is not meant, I adventured again upon my old project, which people here called Neck or nothing—Cold Water. I carried the practice to a greater length than I had ever done in England or Carolina. Thank God, it has succeeded. I have been present in Congress for a Month past at the discussion of some of the most momentous Questions & have been Strong enough to hobble to the Court House about 200 Yards & back twice a day for the last 8 days; if I could be indulged only half a Week, I am persuaded my former Strength would be recovered—But sitting 18 or 19 Sometimes 20 hours in the 24 in Congress & at this Table encourages horrible swellings, which are not quite dispersed by the short respite in Bed, nor has the continued use of Cold Water all that efficacy which it would have, if aided by proper rest.

Be that as it may, I have saved already a good deal of time & by persevering in the severe exercise am apparently gaining ground far beyond all former experience.

This exertion My Dear Sir has likewise put it in my power to attempt to serve Mr. Dart in the appointment intimated in your Letter. I have made the necessary enquiry of the pay Master General Mr. Palfrey, he informs me that Mr. Benj. Harrison Junr. of Virginia is his deputy P.M.G. for the Sothern district, that he is not authorized to appoint any other. If I were to apply to Congress in form, I ought to be armed with arguments in order to shew the utility & necessity of such appointment. 'Tis true Mr. Clay was appointed for Georgia & also that it was in consequence of my particular request & recommendation—a Million of Dollars were granted for that State— I judged it exceedingly necessary that such a Sum of public Money to be distributed in a State distracted in their politics

& Councils should be deposited in the hands of a Man on whose accuracy & Integrity the public could rely. Without meaning to disparage any other Man, or to pay so much attention to the benefit of Mr. Clay as to the Safety & Interest of the public I named him as a Citizen in whose custody the public Treasury would be safe.<sup>2</sup>

The Delegates from Georgia, whether they had any other person or mode in view I cant say, could have no objection to the Man, nor to the measure, they acquiesced, & Congress from these considerations made a special appointment altho' Mr. Palfrey is pay Master General of all the forces of the United States.

If the appointment of a Dep P.M. General is necessary in So Carolina & the President will be pleased to represent it & direct me to apply to Congress I will obey the order without delay & you & Mr. Dart may rely on me not only to put him in Nomination but upon my Vote & all the Interest I can secure in his favour. All this may be done in the course of two Months. If I were to press the Subject without such ground, it is my sentiment that it would be equally improper & impolitic & probably defeat the good end you have in view.

Your kind notices of my Son's behaviour affects me very much. I thank you sincerely for them, I speak & think of that Youth now, not as my Son but as a fellow Citizen whose love for his Country is pure & unmixed. If you knew how totally he is lost to all feeling for Interest or pleasures, & at the same time knew as I know, the unhappy state of our affairs & the shameful prevailing peculation & scrambling for our Loaves & fishes, I beleive you would as I do wish he had a little more attention to the Question—what may be? Notwithstanding this apparent deficiency which is not very criminal in a Young Man I feel great satisfaction result from a knowledge of his distinction in private life, which I am well assured has rendered him acceptable not only in the family in which he resides but to all who know him in the Army. If I may judge from his conduct he has forsaken Father & Wife & Child, Houses & Beds & all for the sake of his Country & the Cause which possesses his whole Heart. O God, I thank thee he is not single, there are yet thousands more & better than him who have not bowed the knee to Mammon, these my Dear Colonel must come forth soon from every Corner of our union to save us, or we shall become a prey to the Robbery & the insatiable avarice of wretches who are hastening our destruction by more sure & infallible means than any other in the hands of the great Tyrant. I say any *other*, because I beleive some of these are his Instruments. If the States do not exert themselves & speedily too, their Stewards will complete their Ruin & disgrace, the Mortification appears to be already too far Spread to admit of Cure without some grand amputating & if delayed the whole fabrick will tumble.

In England there was one Lord Holland,<sup>3</sup> here in these Virtuous



States we have an hundred Foxes who hold unaccounted Millions & who have been taught that Congress have not power to call them to Account.

O Liberty, O Virtue, O my Country! Upon the base prostitution of these sacred names, Knaves & fools are building enormous Estates, sapping the foundations of Liberty, & Virtue & their Country & taxing the honest & undesigning a thousand fold more than the British parliament would or could have done. My Dear Colonel believe me this is no rhapsody, or indulgence of fancy, I speak the words of truth & daily discovery, truth which all acknowledge & pretend to lament but none will heartily join to amend. I fear too many are indirectly concerned by a Brother, a Son or a freind—and some have been directly engaged. Pluck the Reins out of such hands, send more & better guides & tie them down by Instructions—but why do I slander *these*. God knows *we are* what *we are*—too much indeed of the old Leaven, but the Evil complained of had not its origin upon yesterday, we are reaping the fruits from Seed Sown long ago.

We have been from time to time for above a Month past alarmed by accounts from the Commander in Cheif of the near & almost inevitable dispersion of the Army from a want of provision. Nakedness is chearfully submitted. The General has made the most affecting complaints of neglect in the principal departments, has proceeded even to say, that “never was Officer so impeded as he has been,” yet, I intimate it with deep feeling & much regret, too little regard has been paid to his sensible, spirited, Manly Representations. This great & virtuous Man has not acted the *half patriot*, by a hasty resignation. His Complaints are well founded, nevertheless he will not take a Step which may greatly injure thirteen United States because of the inconsiderate conduct, design, ignorance or negligence of a Majority of *twenty one*, too often only of *fifteen* Men. No internal Enemy can hurt him without his own consent. I trust he will not gratify the wishes of those who seek to remove him, if there be any such, & I hope the States will be roused, fill their Representations in Congress with Wise & Spirited Men by whose exertions the heavy Cloud which now hangs over our heads may be dispelled. I have exhibited a very small part of a most gloomy prospective. I speak to you Dear Sir as to a friend & a fellow Citizen, from whom important truths ought not to be concealed & in whose discretion I can confide to apply if practicable, what is laid before him to public use & no other. The first great Step will be for every State to Send proper Men to fill the whole Representation, Men of Integrity & Men of great ability. Let Carolina Send no other & call me away for being deficient in the latter requisite only. I am sure I am honest, I am as sure of my insufficiency for this great Charge, but let me tell you if you & all the other States do not exert yourselves<sup>4</sup> instantly you may be too late. I tell you with a tear of Blood—I shall not be shocked if I learn this Evening Our Army is dispersed, because there is too much

ground to fear & therefore I am not unprepared for the Event. This cannot happen from a want of provision in the Country, nor from a want of the appointment of a Quarter Master General, & commissaries general & Deputies of both without number. If it shall happen infamous envy may be gratified, but the General will bear no blame. I know who & who will execrated & who now deserves to be so. When engaged in these melancholy reflections I am tempted to think that those who have scraped in Millions of Dollars & vested them in permanent property are endeavouring at all hazards, to secure by any terms of peace, their Ill gained pelf—but I will say no more. I will go to Congress, endeavour to Counteract some, & reconcile the honest hearts now at variance.

It is impossible that you should be kept ignorant of an unhappy dispute subsisting between our Commander in Cheif & General Gates, I was long ago told of jealousies, but lately dangerous altercations have appeared & passed through Congress; a Letter written by General Conway to General Gates fanned up this alarming flame. You will see in Charles Town some particulars of this affair. General Conway has been with me, assured me General Washington had been deceived & imposed on, that his Letter contained no such expressions as had been reported to the General, he was pleased to ask my sentiments upon propriety of printing the Letter but did not offer to shew it me. These I delivered in every dissuasive argument to the measure, & added all the reasoning I was capable of to press the necessity for drawing a Veil before the Eyes of our Enemies, who from the very appearance of so capital a division would collect fresh encouragement for continuing their attempts to destroy our Independence—& their success would be followed by Scenes of Calamity in thousands of families of these States horrible even in Idea. Under a Strong allusion, I remarked, it was the duty of every Citizen who pretended Love to his Country to employ his Talents in attempts to heal wounds upon our fraternal connexion, none but Enemies in disguise would recommend a measure which must infallibly widen the breach &c &c. The General was pleased to receive my opinion with apparent cordiality, said he was convinced of the justness of my observations, & that it did not become Soldiers to print.

I have seen the Letter—in the hands of one of your *good sort of Men* who shews it only to proper persons, I gained a perusal by intreaty!—this day (the 27th).<sup>5</sup> It is true General Washington was misinformed, the Letter does not contain the words which had been reported to him—but—ten times worse in every view.

I say these things Dear Colonel to your Self, the World will be informed, but while it is not my province I desire not to appear officious or to be held up as an author. Depend upon me for this Duty, I will strive to make peace by every proper means & here I will leave this disagreeable Subject.

As I strove hard for effecting the determination of Congress for

suspending the embarkation of Mr. Burgoyne, it affords me great satisfaction to find that measure approbated by the most sensible & by all the Officers in the Army, as well for the justice as the policy of the Act.

We have now in motion an Irruption into Canada under the Command of Marquis delafayette, provided he will condescend to accept of Mr. Conway for his second, if I may judge from his Letters to me in which he speaks of this Officer with the utmost abhorrence, he will not.<sup>6</sup> What Congress may then determine is uncertain. General Conway having learned the Marquis's disposition, pushed forward only yesterday (29th) which according to the plan of his friends, will make a shew of his activity in having commenced the enterprize, the Marquis will be here this Morning. A particular friend of General Conway has lamented to me that all the French Officers hated him & I learn from others that none of the English Officers (except a little party) love him. I had, before some late discoveries, entertained a very high opinion of this General.

A late determination in Congress has mortified me more than a little. Upon my application for appointing a Brigadier in our State it was determined to postpone the consideration until a Committee now at Camp should return. In Justice to Colonel Huger I nominated him, expressing my wishes at the same time that Colonel Motte on Account of his personal Merit as well as from the real necessity of our State, should also be appointed, but there was no body on the floor to take up & improve the Suggestions from the Chair, or to reply to the specious reasonings for postponing, in which I perceived a good deal of design relative to Rank. I was necessitated to content myself, however much discontented, with barely demanding the appointment as a Right.<sup>7</sup> We deserve the Evil of this delay & greater for our Shameful unpardonable delay of filling up our Delegation with sensible, vigilant, faithful Citizens.

The Representation of these Infant States as above remarked has been for a long time past 21 Men—often 15—sometimes barely Nine States by Units. Admitting we were all, what truth knows we are not, there are not Men enough even for the drudgery of Committees. But at present, we want genius, Insight, foresight, fortitude & all the virtuous powers of the human Mind. O shameful, shameless Sons of Liberty—versatile boasting Americans!

Ye have brought Yokes of Oxen & Married Wives, ye stay to prove them. Trifle a little longer, & ye & your Wives, go graze with those Oxen which once had been your property. Dear Colonel with every Sentiment of affection & respect, I bid you Adieu.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> Isaac Motte (1738–95), South Carolina rice planter and assemblyman, was a delegate to Congress, 1780–82. *Bio. Dir. Cong.*



<sup>2</sup> See Laurens to Joseph Clay, August 20, 1777.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Fox, 1st baron Holland (1705–74), had amassed a great personal fortune as paymaster general of British forces during the Seven Years War. *DNB*.

<sup>4</sup> Laurens wrote “themselves” above “yourselves” without crossing out the latter.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Roberdeau was the holder of Conway’s letter. As Lt. Col. John Fitzgerald explained to Washington in a letter written at York on February 16, 1778:

“Upon my arrival here on Saturday afternoon, I waited upon Mr. Laurens, who (then being much engag’d) asked me to Breakfast next Morning giving me to understand that he had something of Consequence to say to me. In the Morn’g. he asked ‘if you had ever seen the much talk’d of Letter from Genl. Conway to Genl. Gates,’ I answer’d I was certain that you never had, unless, since my departure from Camp. He then said it was now in the Hands of Mr. Roberdeau, who (to his Knowledge) shew’d it to some & he had reason to believe, to a great many, & that though the Paragraph Quoted by Colonel Wilkinson was not set down Verbatim, yet that in Substance it contain’d that & ten times more. Upon this I determin’d to demand it from Mr. Roberdeau in order to let you have a Copy of it. As this Gentleman always Spends Sunday in most ostensible Acts of public & private Devotion I deferr’d waiting on him ’till this morning when after a short introduction I let him into the intention of my Visit. He assur’d me that he had shewn the Letter only to two, the President & another & gave me his Honor that he had deliver’d it to a French Gentleman by an order from Genl. Conway which was sent back after he had crossed Susquehanah. He was full of his Assurances that the Letter did not contain the Paragraph alluded to which gave him infinite Satisfaction as he entertain’d the highest respect both for you & Genl. Gates. He added however that had the Letter remain’d in his possession he should not have thought himself at Liberty to let a Copy be taken without the consent of the Gentleman who intrusted him with it. I told him that as he had pledged his Honor about the delivery of it, I thought it unnecessary to say any more upon that subject, but that I should have thought it my duty to have taken the most effectual means of Procuring a Copy had the Original remain’d in his hands. I then return’d to Mr. Laurens who (notwithstanding this Gentlemans acknowledged Piety) did not give full credit to his assertions about the delivery of the Letter. Mr. Laurens then gave me an extract which he had taken from it, which I take the Liberty of inclosing to you. The whole of that Letter I understand was couched in terms of the most bitter Invective of which this is a small sample.

“I inclose you this Abstract rather for your private Information, than with an expectation of its answering any other purpose at this time. As I am of Opinion that the Gentlemen who have been most active in this dirty Business, are by this time heartily Sick of it, & plainly perceive that the Fabric which they were endeavoring to Rear was likely to fall upon their own Heads. Mr. Laurens’s Sentiments upon the whole of this matter were exceedingly just & deliver’d with the greatest Candor.” Washington Papers, DLC.

The extract from Conway’s letter to General Gates that Fitzgerald sent to Washington is in the hand of Henry Laurens and states: “What a Pity there is but one Gates! but the more I see of this Army the less I think it fit for general Action under its actual Chiefs & actual discipline. I speak sincerely & freely & wish I could serve under you.” *Ibid*. This differs in word though not in spirit from the original version of Conway’s remark conveyed to Washington in November 1777: “Heaven has been determined to save your Country; or a weak General and bad Councillors would have ruind it.” Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:29. See also James Lovell to Horatio Gates, November 27, 1777, note 1.

<sup>6</sup> See Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:216–17, 254, 260–61.

<sup>7</sup> There is no mention of these actions in the journals. In a November 29 letter

to President Laurens that was received on December 21, Gen. Robert Howe, commander of the southern military department, explained that the resignation of Brig. Gen. Christopher Gadsden of South Carolina and the transfer of Brig. Gen. Lachlan McIntosh of Georgia necessitated the appointment of another brigadier general for each state and recommended Cols. Isaac Huger of South Carolina and Samuel Elbert of Georgia. PCC, item 160, fols. 414, 416.

## Gouverneur Morris to Henry Laurens

Sir,

Camp 26th Jany 1777 [i.e. 1778]

I have taken Occasion to speak to the Marquis de la Fayette upon the Appointment you know of. The Sentiments of his Heart which are fully expressed in a Letter to you do him so much Honor that any Expressions of mine would be impertinent.<sup>1</sup> I am deeply surprized at the mature Judgment & solid Understanding of this *Young Man* for such he certainly is.<sup>2</sup> The Impropriety of having the first and second in Command from a foreign Country is strongly stated by him and his Apprehensions that it would be disagreeable to the Subjects of America are certainly not ill founded for great Liberality in vulgar Minds is not common even in America. It deserves the Consideration of Congress whether in Case an Accident should happen to the Commander in Chief it would be prudent to trust a Person whose object it is to push his Fortunes in France with an Opportunity to imbue the Minds of the Canadians with a Love of the Grand Monarque who may as probably like Canada as any of his Predecessors. This Consideration has not the *less* Weight from being mentioned by the Marquis. His having pitched upon McDougall who you may remember I wished to have with him may have prepossessed me in Favor of what some Gentlemen may call his Prejudices and this Prepossession is as you may well suppose not weakened by his Declaration that he would willingly act under him as second in Command if deemed necessary for the Service. I write standing in the midst of Company. You will therefore be so kind as to excuse the Stile of this Letter which upon Perusal I find to be very defective.

I have the Honor to be, with very great Respect, Sir, Your most obedient & very humble Servant,  
Gouv'r Morris

RC (DNA: PCC, item 78). Endorsed: "Refd. Board War."

<sup>1</sup> In a private letter that he apparently wrote this day, Lafayette explained to Laurens that he strongly opposed the appointment of Gen. Thomas Conway as his second in command for the projected Canadian expedition because of Conway's efforts to stir up disaffection with Washington in the army and in Congress. "How can I support the society of a man," asked the marquis, "who has spoken of my friend [Washington] in the most insolent and abusive terms, who has done, and does every day all in his power to ruin him, who tries to spend the fire in every part of the army and the country." Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:254. During a brief stay in York to obtain formal instructions for

the expedition from the Board of War, Lafayette officially wrote to Congress on January 31 and asked that it appoint Gen. Alexander McDougall or Gen. Johann de Kalb, both of whom had seniority over Conway, to serve with him in Canada. Congress agreed to this request on February 2. Although McDougall was not well enough to accept the post, Kalb did join Lafayette and displace Conway as the marquis' second in command. See *ibid.*, pp. 267-71, 281, 291-92; and *JCC*, 10:107.

<sup>2</sup> Morris, who was nearing his twenty-sixth birthday when he wrote this letter, was only five years older than Lafayette.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

York Town Jany. 26th. 1778

The Delligates of this State are honored with your Letter in Council with it's enclosures respecting the extraordinary interference of Mr. Harvey & Mr. Morris in the affair of the Brittish Convoy and the Innholder at Lancaster which were laid before Congress this afternoon, and defered for consideration 'till tomorrow, when I doubt not your spirited Conduct will be highly approved and the treatment you met with impunged.<sup>1</sup> The subject was introduced under the idea of the Trojan Horse travelling through our land not filled with men but most probably with the more dangerous Enemy counterfeited continental money, which may be part of the contents of the Bails in the Waggon, agreeable to the Specimen obtained of the Waggoners, whose imprisonment was applauded by every member who spoke on the subject, as the searching every person of the Escort and of all the packages would have been; but most of all the bringing every traiterous Conspirator against the Liberties of these States by so diabolical a scheme would redound to the honor of our State, and would be seasonable Victims, in terrorem, to our much injured Country. You will have opportunity of special inquiry into any further hidden machination, as the Board of War have stopped the progress of the Waggon, and I hope it will be improved, and that you will not hold the sword of Justice in vain. Congress has no right to interfere in our civil policy, nor will it be presumed, however their result on the Subject of the papers above mentioned will be communicated as soon as I have it in my power. The copy of the Letter forwarded to Gen. Washington found on the Serjeant would have [*been*] very satisfactory, pray favor me with it without delay, with a particular account of the Escort, and the ostensible rank they bear, for I very much suspect fictitious Characters. I also request to know something more particular of the conduct of the Capt. & Lieut. bearers of the indecent paper deliverd to the Secretary of Council, and whether they are not Continental Officers. The astonishing Conduct of the two Members of Congress who were to have consulted with the State on the Subject of Supplies, is a presage of the unfortunate issue of that measure, concerning which you are entirely silent.



I could weep over my suffering Country cramped at this season for vigorous exertion, by the want of provisions, with which our Country abounds, and I wish I could clear our own State of the horrid sin of the Commissarial Department from which at the very time of that most mischievous arrangement, carried I believe but by one voice, I predicted the injuries we have and still suffer, for Gods sake, for our Country's sake never let a Delligate represent the State from any consideration, one moment longer than he is faithful, or one moment after he is a Subject of just suspicion. You would pardon me if you knew my sufferings and indignation on account of this and other less destructive measures, tho very hurtful to the common cause, which a very feeble voice could not prevent. I pray you to cast about for some Characters 2, 3 or more, expert, faithful and active in the way of purchasing, that you can recommend to me, will Robt. Towers do as one? I know he was indefatigable in another line of Duty. I pray you also to point out some elligible mode of procuring large quantities of biscuit and proper persons for that branch that I may be furnished with proper Characters to recommend to Congress. Ludowick I fear is incompetant.<sup>2</sup> The use of flour instead of hard bread has been I believe the death of thousands. I beg to be favoured with hearing from you soon & am, Sir, Yr. most obt. huml Servt,

Danl. Roberdeau

[P.S.] The Commissary General,<sup>3</sup> warmly recommended by our State has just found out that he is incompetant to the business.

RC (PHarH).

<sup>1</sup> Wharton's "Letter in Council" has not been found, but for "the extraordinary interference of Harvey & Morris," see John Harvie and Gouverneur Morris to the Pennsylvania Council, January 24, 1778. Wharton's letter was referred to the Board of War on the 28th, and one bearing on this episode written by Washington on January 26 to the board was read in Congress two days later, at which time the entire issue was debated and referred back to the board, which was directed "to enquire minutely into the number and rank of . . . officers who have come out of Philadelphia . . . and into the conduct of all the persons who compose the escort." See *JCC*, 10:95, 101. The journals do not record the substance of the debate stimulated by Wharton's complaint, but for an account of the issues discussed in the course of it see Roberdeau's January 30 letter to President Wharton. For the Board of War's January 31 letter to the Pennsylvania Council reporting the results of the inquiry demanded by Congress, as well as the council's February 16 response, see *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:216, 268.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Ludwick, the superintendent of bakers for the Continental Army.

<sup>3</sup> Commissary General of Purchases William Buchanan, for whose department Roberdeau requested nominations in this letter and in his January 27 letter to George Bryan.

## John Henry to Thomas Johnson

Sir

York Town Jany. 27th. 1778

The unsettled State which I have been in since I got here, has put it out of my power to answer your Letter of 19th Jany. before this Time.<sup>1</sup>

Congress is extremely sorry the Salt could not be procured; at the same Time they highly approve of your Excellency's Conduct, and desired the president to return you and the Council the Thanks of Congress for your respect and Attention to their resolve.

Congress have accepted the Salt you offered, and I expect the president has wrote you fully upon that head;<sup>2</sup> the Commissary is likewise to purchase such quantities as he may think necessary; and I am in hopes with what he will receive from you, there will be a sufficient quantity for the present Demand.

I am sensible of the low state of our own Treasury and I believe I may assure you with truth, that the Continental Treasury here is in a much worse Situation. However we have procured a Warrant on Ths. Harwood Esqr. commissioner of the continental loan office for the State of Maryland for twenty thousand dollars, drawn in your favour for the purpose of recruiting the Army.<sup>3</sup>

The Situation of our Army is truly alarming and unless we can supply it with provisions by some means more effectual than any now adopted, I am afraid they must seperate—a Committee is now out for that purpose.<sup>4</sup>

The Army is to undergo a Reformation. Mr. Carroll was one of the Members of Congress appointed on that Business, but the indisposition of Mrs. Carrol called him home; the other Gentlemen that were appointed are now at Camp.<sup>5</sup>

Congress have at length agreed upon the just and equitable Doctrine of Ritaliation,<sup>6</sup> which you may see by the enclosed papers.

We have no news. Make my respects to the Council and believe me to be Sir, with great respect your very hble. Servt.

J. Henry Junr.

RC (MdAA).

<sup>1</sup> Probably a reference to Johnson's January 19 letter to President Laurens, which is in PCC, item 70, fols. 241-44, and *Md. Archives*, 16:469-70. No letter from Johnson to the Maryland delegates of this date has been found.

<sup>2</sup> See Henry Laurens to Thomas Johnson, January 24, 1778, note 2.

<sup>3</sup> See *JCC*, 10:89.

<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly the committee appointed on January 14 to "revise" the "commisariate system." See *JCC*, 10:51.

<sup>5</sup> According to the journals Charles Carroll of Carrollton took his seat in Congress on January 17 and on January 20 was added to the committee appointed to go to Washington's headquarters. This evidence, coupled with Henry's statement inferring that Carroll had been gone from York a few days, indicates that Carroll attended Congress briefly this month, although Burnett

omitted reference to it in his summary of Carroll's delegate attendance for 1778. See *JCC*, 10:59, 67; and Burnett, *Letters*, 3:liii.

<sup>6</sup> For Congress' January 21 resolves designed to tie treatment of British prisoners of war to that accorded to Americans in British hands, see *JCC*, 10:77-81.

## Henry Laurens to the Chevalier de La Neuville

Sir,<sup>1</sup>

27th Jany 1778

The Letters & documents which you put into my hands for the consideration of Congress were duly presented this Morning, & after the opinions of Several Members had been delivered on the Subject, it was Resolved upon a question to postpone a determination until the House Shall have received a Report from a Committee lately Sent to General Washington's Army, who have, among other Duties, in charge to make new arrangements in Some Ranks of Officers.

I pressed the House as forcibly as became me, to consider your request for a decisive answer, but it was their pleasure to rest at the Resolve abovementioned, from whence, it is my private Sentiment, Congress are disposed from Considerations of your Merits as well as of those respectable recommendations which accompanied your application to grant the Rank you desire in the Army of the United States of America, provided this may be done without prejudice to the Service. I have the honour to be &c.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13). Addressed: "Le Chevalier Lanuville, York."

<sup>1</sup> Louis-Pierre Penot Lombart, chevalier de La Neuville (b. 1744), an importunate French volunteer, received an appointment as inspector general of the northern army on May 14, a brevet commission as a Continental brigadier general on October 14, 1778, and then returned to France in January 1779. See *JCC*, 11:499, 12:1010; and André Lasseray, *Les Français sous les treize étoiles (1775-1783)*, 2 vols. (Macon and Paris: Imprimerie Protat Frères, 1935), 2:349-56.

## Henry Laurens to William Livingston

Sir,

27 Jany 1778.

Your Excellency's favours of the 7th & 8th Inst.<sup>1</sup> having immediately upon presentment to Congress been sent to the Board of War & not returned, from thence I have received no particular commands to transmit in return—except the Inclosed Warrant on the loan Office of New Jersey for Ten Thousand Dollars, the purpose for which it was granted is specified in the Warrant.<sup>2</sup>

I likewise Inclose an Act of Congress of the 29th December for



bringing to punishment when practicable, such of the inhabitants of these States as have joined or shall join the Enemy.<sup>3</sup>

Also an Act of the 21st Inst. relative to the treatment of prisoners prefaced by a recital of an Act of the 19th December formerly transmitted & 5 Copies.<sup>4</sup>

I am with very sincere Esteem &ca.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup> Governor Livingston's letters—the first to the Board of War and the second to Laurens—are in PCC, item 68, fols. 317–22.

<sup>2</sup> Congress issued this money to New Jersey on January 24 “for the purpose of recruiting the continental batallions of the said state.” *JCC*, 10:89. See also Laurens to Livingston, December 29, 1777, note 1.

<sup>3</sup> This “Act” was actually passed on December 30. *JCC*, 9:1069.

<sup>4</sup> See *JCC*, 10:74–81. Laurens also informed Commissary of Prisoners Elias Boudinot of this “Act” in a brief letter that he wrote to him this day. PCC, item 13, fol. 157.

## Henry Laurens to William Livingston

Dear Sir,

27 Jany. 1778.

I have but a moment at present for acknowledging, & returning thanks for the Honour received in your Excellencys favour of the 8th. I shall always reflect upon the tender of Gov. Livingston's freindship as one of the very happy events in my Life. I will also sedulously endeavor to retain an acquisition which feels the more valuable as it came unexpected. But alas Sir, what have I, who am neither a Scholar nor a Wit, to return in Exchange for your polite correspondence, call me one Step beyond the composition of a plain Letter of business, & I am gravelled. If after this frank & laconic declaration your Excellency shall be pleased to take me as I am, & to confirm the late proposition, you will find me faithful, ready to embrace occasions for evidencing an Esteem which I had entertained for your Character, long before the adventitious circumstance of Official addresses had drawn me into Your Excellency's veiw. Set me down therefore, if you please Sir, upon the premised Conditions, as one of your humble Servants, one who rejoices in the opportunity afforded him of signifying his desire to be sincerely attached to you, & in nothing within the Sphere of my capacity will Your Excellency be deceived, or wilfully disappointed by me.

If I were to indulge a querulous vein I should detain your Excellency by a long detail of disorders & distractions in all our public affairs, Superadded to the baneful effects of avarice & speculation, among them & not the least, the appearance, it would be warrantable to Say, raging, of a dangerous party Spirit, but I forbear, & will still

trust, that the States will be awakened from their present Lethargy & again think it necessary to be Represented in Congress by Men of ability & in Sufficient Numbers. A most shameful deficiency in this branch is the greatest Evil & is indeed the source of almost all our Evils. Admitting that we, who are present, were all, what truth knows we are not, it would not be possible for 21, often 15, & sometimes barely 9 States represented by Units, to discharge with accuracy & expedition which is due to all business, the business which is daily presented to Congress, much less, if that can be, to look into that which has long been in Arrears. Hence Thousands I may say Millions have been wasted & are wasting every day—hence our American Foxes holding unaccounted Millions have gained time enough to learn & impudence enough to Say, the powers of Congress fall Short of compulsive means for bringing them to a reckoning. Besides, we want genius for Striking out new matter, for correcting errors & repressing dangerous appearances, by measures Wise, silent & effectual. Your Excellency is too well acquainted with the disorders of our domestic concerns, I am sorry to assure you, all our foreign wear the aspect of mere chance-medley. Hence Naked Soldiers, Deaths, replete Hospitals, desertions & evacuated Regiments, hence too in my judgment, we are very lightly esteemed abroad & probably are held up this very Instant at Auction—part of the conduct of the faithful Court of Versailles will justify the suggestion. Is it not from these considerations incumbent upon every Man of Influence throughout our Union to exert his powers at this Crisis, to exhort each State to fill up its Representation in Congress with the best, that is the most sensible, vigilant & faithful Citizens? At present it seems as if every such Man had bought his yoke of Oxen & prayed to be excused. A little longer trifling will fix a galling yoke upon themselves, there is but one thing I think can prevent it. Our Antagonist is as Idle, as profligate as ourselves & keeps pace with us in profusion, mismanagement & family discord.

Some of us however should remember the fate of the quarreling Curs & guard against a Similar decision, disgraceful & fatal.

Methinks I can perceive a design in our artful, Specious half-freinds to come in for at least part of the Bone. Perseverance in our present track will oblige us to run in debt more & more abroad, & there are among us some who discover an amazing avidity to do so. Let us be dipped a few Millions deeper in foreign debt, means will be easily found for protracting the War & our flimsy Independency will become abjectly dependent upon those who may either Send their Ships to collect accumulated Interest & dictate the mode of payment, or may obtain payment if they prefer it in Thread Needle Street. Will sober Men rely upon the faith or upon the Benevolence of Kings? Has France done one act of kindness towards us but what has been plumply for the promotion of her own Interest? Has she

not played off our Commissioner-Ambassadors like puppets? She has bountifully offered us the loan of Money provided we would furnish her with the means for raising it. "Contract for —— Hogsheads of Tobacco in order to help the Revenue & you shall have Money." We have received & I believe Spent without any visible profitable Exchange the Money but the Tobacco is not Shipped. What consequences must follow? Interest infallibly—resentment & reprisal when their policy shall direct. Has not France "cautiously avoided every transaction that should *seem* to imply American Independency." Have we not been told that "every step was taken to gratify England publicly, forbidding American ships with Military Stores to depart, then privately permitting them, recalling their Officers who had obtained leave to go to America but encouraging them to go in Shoals, giving strict orders that our prizes should not be sold in their Ports, at the same time assuring us of their good Will & intimating that these measures were necessary at present."

Have not we been also told that the French Ministry after reading our Quixot propositions for a Treaty had said, "You have not bid high enough," & that while we were keeping the knowledge of that Treaty perfect free Masonry in Philadelphia, Lord George Germaine was laughing at it in the Plantation Office?

These Sir are old Stories, but they are the most recent we have from that quarter. Our late Packet from Plasy through the superabundant circumspection of our commissioners imported nothing more than Charte Blanche. We have been Jockeyed out of the Original. We have the strongest proofs of French perfidy, as well as of British imbecility & American credulity & puppetism—and yet Sir, we are dreaming on, trusting as it were to providence to give us this day our daily need of Brown paper, & drawing from France, as from an exhaustless spring, altho she has told us in so many words, "it is<sup>1</sup> impossible to lend us two Millions Sterling." Our Agents in the West Indies without money & over head & Ears in debt. If Congress were full or even two thirds full, might we not expect Some Men in the group who would look into these important matters & contrive means for playing a Card against French policy, it is not necessary that we should break off with France. We might make use of her. I am sure it may be done with good effect, but as I have already intimated, it seems as if every Man fit for these great purposes had Married a Wife & stayed to prove her. Sir I see & I lament—but I can do nothing more than a kind of negative good. I do no harm, & think my Self very happy when I can countermine an intended Evil. If there be not Speedily a Resurrection of able Men & of that Virtue which I thought had been genuine in 1775, We are gone—we shall undo ourselves—we must flee to the Mountains, but Woe to them who have been Governors & presidents who have given orders for borrowing the King's Gun powder & for suspending the embarka-



tion of his favorite Warrior. Forgive me Sir I have been deceived in the time & did not mean to have been so troublesome. I am with very Sincere Regard &ca.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> At this point in the LB Laurens inserted an asterisk to the following remarks he wrote just below the complimentary close of the letter: "It is morally impossible this can be true, & I believe they have already proved it by lending us a larger sum. I am afraid they have—but extending a kindness under a plea of Poverty heightens the obligation on one side & strengthens the claim to grateful & suitable acknowledgments on the other."

## Henry Laurens to George Washington

Sir,

York Town 27th Jany 1778

While I was sitting in Congress yesterday a Member came in & delivered me the inclosed Paper<sup>1</sup> just in its present State except the broken Seals, the Gentleman's declaration as he was putting the thing into my hand, that he had picked it up on the Stairs, was a sufficient alarm. I passed my Eye cursorily over the Pages, put them into my Pocket & intimated to the House, that it was an anonymous production containing stuff which I must be content with, as perquisites of Office—that the hearth was the proper depository for such Records. I have shown it to no body & have long hesitated upon the propriety of troubling Your Excellency with the knowledge of an attempt for which I want a proper stigma. If I have erred in my present determination I beg Your Excellency will beleive that my motives are pure, & that as I wish to avoid the very appearance of being party Man or an Informer Your Excellency will be pleased to receive this in confidence & in the favorable light of an innocent intrusion.<sup>2</sup>

I am with the most sincere Esteem & Regard, Sir, Your Excellency's  
Most obedient servant,

Henry Laurens

RC (DLC photostat).

<sup>1</sup> The "Paper" Laurens sent to Washington was entitled "The Thoughts of a Freeman," dated January 17, 1778, and addressed "To the President of Congress & every member thereof." It consisted of a scathing indictment of Washington's performance as commander in chief and concluded with a ringing call for his dismissal: "no good may be expected from the standing army, until Baal [Washington] and his worshippers are banished from the camp." The author of this anonymously written document remains unknown. See Washington Papers, DLC; and George Washington, *The Writings of George Washington*, ed. Jared Sparks, 12 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1847), 5:497–99. For Washington's response to this paper, see Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:410–11.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens also wrote a brief letter to Washington this day transmitting January 19 and 21 resolves relating to prisoners of war. PCC, item 13, fol. 156; and JCC, 10:61–62, 74–82.

## Francis Lewis to Thomas Johnson

Dear Sir,

Baltimore 27th Janry. 1778

Being indulged by Congress with a few days absence in order to Visit my family at this place, As a member of the Marine Committee, I have been charged by that Board, to inspect the fitting out some Continental Vessells now in this harbour; of which one is a new Vessell built for a Packet Boat<sup>1</sup> destined to carry the Congress's dispatches to their Commissioners in Europe; This Vessell is ordered to be fitted for the sea with the utmost expedition, and Commanded by Thomas Read Esqr. of the Effingham<sup>2</sup> Frigate now laid up at Borden Town.

As this Packet Boat is directed to be armed for defence, being pierced for Twelve Carriage Guns, four pounders and as no such cannon can be procured here, induces me to apply to your Excellency for Ten pieces of Cannon for that purpose, being informed that there is now at Annapolis several such belonging to this state under your direction.

If the Cannon can be spared, please to let me know the terms on behalf of the State, and upon the receipt of your answer I shall return to Congress and report the same.<sup>3</sup> I have the honor to be, your Excellencys most Obedient Humbl Servant, Fra. Lewis

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> The *Baltimore*.<sup>2</sup> Read actually commanded the *Washington*.<sup>3</sup> The Maryland Council of Safety informed Lewis on February 11, 1778, that it was willing to allow Congress to purchase "six four Pounders . . . and their Carriages compleat . . . for the Price such would sell for at Baltimore." *Md. Archives*, 16:488-89.

## James Lovell to Joseph Trumbull

Dear Sir

Janry. 27th. 1778.

Your Letter of the 10th from Windham has come to hand, and, I assure you, gives me all the pain which a stranger to you would conjecture you wished it might give me at the time you wrote it. But, be equally assured that ninety nine hundreths of that pain arrises from the consideration of your ill state of health. Personally I deserve not any of your railing. And, if I was the main instrument in bringing about all you complain of, yet the present sufferings of the public Cause would, as they well may, so fully occupy my mind and occasion so much regret & pain that there would be no room left for your complaints of a personal nature to make impression. To be very honest with you, I think you have more than bodily Jaundice. The

Gentleman who now presides here has a great regard for your hond. Father, and perhaps from an aim to show it has put you into a rage. A circular letter was written by a *Committee* to go to the *Legislature* of each of the 13 States. It begins Sir; and the *President* was ordered to *transmit it*. This he ought perhaps to have done *variously* as the Legislatures are variously constituted. He ought to have sent to the Govr. or the Presidt. or the Speaker; for Sir is meant for the Head of the Legislature. But you have taken it for granted that yr. good Father was treated differently from the Head of the other Legislatures, and this *designedly by Congress*. The President being sick at Home thought Sir was intended for the Speaker of the lower house; here is the mystery.<sup>1</sup>

I feel a little vexed with myself for having wrote so many lines upon this subject when I ought to have spent the same Ink in persuading you to come and help other honest men to mend bad plans or make some new ones.

I must remark that you are as much wrong about P——'s being preferred before you as you were about yr. Father's being ill treated.<sup>2</sup> A Board of War was chosen while a Committee was planning a Victualling board. This last Committee reported that the addition of yr. honor alone to the board of war would compleatly answer all the end proposed, thus you was elected. And the addition of one more was made as Genl. Gates may be occasionally called away in a military line ergo Mr. P——. I have no arguments to use with you to come here but merely that of serving your country, for be assured that your accommodations will be bad and your Salary little adequate to the avaricious griping Spirit of these anglo-german People. I recon, dear Justice, you will call this Letter a new Insult; but be prepared, for I will continue to ask you from time to time to help us through the dangers of Shipwreck tho' I should be scolded by you ten times more than I have been.

My best Regards to your Amelia who I suppose could hang me for persuading you to forget your Injuries & consequently to leave her and wear yourself out for the public. Yr. obliged Friend, J L

RC (CtHi).

<sup>1</sup> See Henry Laurens to the States, December 23, 1777, note 2.

<sup>2</sup> Lovell may have been referring to either Timothy Pickering or Richard Peters, but the reference is probably to the latter. Pickering was elected to the Board of War on November 7, and Peters and Trumbull were appointed to it on November 27, 1777. *JCC*, 9:874, 971. If Trumbull was objecting to Peters' appointment, the protest was ironic because, according to Eliphalet Dyer, Peters was appointed instead of Joseph Reed, who was believed to be objectionable to Trumbull. See Dyer to Joseph Trumbull, November 28, 1777, and Elbridge Gerry to Joseph Trumbull, November 27, 1777, note 1.



## Daniel Roberdeau to George Bryan

Sir,

York Town Jany. 27th. 1778

I have but time to forward the enclosed<sup>1</sup> which came to hand since my letter to the President last Evening. As it relates to the subject then treated of you'll be pleased to present it to Council with my Respects. Please to desire any friend comming this way to bring me two of Dilworth's spelling books or of Gano's. I am of the committee to revise and report on the Commissary's department, and I think it probable that purchasers will be appointed in each State, therefore I repeat my request to Council that proper persons may be recommended. I asked in my letter to Council whether Rob Towers would do, I now desire to know what you think of F. Wade and Mr. Geo. Kennedy as Purchasers? I should be glad of a confirmation of the Militia in Jersey taking a large body of the Enemy mentioned in a Letter from Mr. Smith who I expect forward therefore do not write him. I am respectfully, Sir, Yr. most ob. huml. Servt,

Danl. Roberdeau

RC (PHarH).

<sup>1</sup> Not identified.John Witherspoon to  
William Churchill HoustonDr Sir<sup>1</sup>

York Town Jany 27. 1778

Your Favours of the 20th & 31st of last reached me at the same Time & no sooner than the Day before Yesterday by Capt. Lane. I was sorry for this as some things required an immediate Answer for want of which I am probably bearing some Blame. You would however I hope receive two Letters written by me since I came here<sup>2</sup> which by making no Mention of such a Thing would convince you that a Recess of Congress was not in Contemplation. I never heard it so much as mentioned in this Place & I am persuaded that the Circumstances of Affairs do not admit of it.

My former Letters would convince you how much Anxiety I felt for the State of New Jersey this Winter but you have reason to be thankful that the present situation of the Army is favourable indeed compared to what was fully intended when I passed through the Camp in my Way to this Place. They designed to have gone as far back as Lancaster, Reading & Easton. I spoke to Gen. Washington with great Earnestness upon the subject & as soon as I came here obtained a Resolve of Congress recommending to him to pay a particular Attention to the exposed State of New Jersey.<sup>3</sup>

I am sorry indeed that your Tax Bill failed but you must set about

it again immediately. The State of Massachusetts have besides large Taxes called in all their own Paper Money to be paid either by the Taxes or by Treasury Notes on Interest which has already raised the value of continental Money 15 per Cent. I could heartily wish our State would do the same. Measures of so essential Importance at such a season ought to be pursued without minding [. . .] popular Clamours of wrong headed People. I have always found that time justified what was in itself right when done from upright Principles. You were right to send a Committee to New Haven since it was desired & the rest were to do it but I look upon the scheme to be impracticable & absurd.<sup>4</sup> Fixing Prices by Law never had nor ever will have any Effect but stopping Commerce & making Things scarce & dear. That Circumstance with some other Defects in the Commissary Department has brought our Army frequently near to starving. I believe the Congress is now convinced of that & though late will try to lay up the Magazines for next Summer by voluntary Contracts. I wish the Legislature of each State would take the Direction of this Matter. They are doing so in Connecticut. When your Assembly meets could not the Members point out Dealers in the different Counties who would Contract for & collect Quantities of Flour, Beef, Pork & have the meat salted up before the Hot weather comes on—but I cannot enlarge.

You will have heard by this Time that Congress has ordered that Gen. Burgoyne shall not be suffered to embark till the Convention is ratified by the Court of Britain. I arrived here just in Time to help on that Measure.<sup>5</sup> It appeared to me both just & Necessary. There are many Circumstances that indicated an Intention in him on frivolous Pretences to break it & if he had availed himself of these Pretences after he had got aboard the Public would not have easily forgiven us for not acting with greater Caution.

There are no other News that I am at Liberty to communicate. Mr Hart will inform you what was done as to the Demand for money. Since that time there has been an Order in favor of Gov. Livingston for 10,000 Dollars out of the Loan Office of New Jersey & as I suppose before the first of March a considerable sum will be there. We shall take Care that no Body shall get it but our own State.

A Committee of Congress is gone to Camp to regulate the Army in which I wish they may succeed. Our Officers are infected with such a seizing thirst for Rank and Pay & there is sometimes such a Want of Firmness in Congress that there is Danger of their throwing Things into Confusion. In this as in most Cases we grow wise though late by Experience so that I hope they will not obtain their exorbitant Demands & yet be brought into Order. Some of them to my certain Knowledge have threatened to resign who if they did resign durst not show their Faces in their own States. I believe I would have been chosen upon that Committee but I positively refused it chiefly on

Account of my Character & Profession but not from any fear of encountering them or yielding to any unjust Demand.

I am at a Loss what to say about the Time you mention for my Return Home. It is now so near that unless Dr. Scudder comes immediately it is impracticable and it is really improper to leave Congress at present when much Business of the last Consequence is to be done & the Time is approaching when we must hear from England and France after the News of Burgoynes Surrender reaches them.<sup>6</sup> I must expect to hear from you in Answer to this which will determine me.

I would willingly contribute all in my power to the Circulation & Success of Collins's Paper.<sup>7</sup> I wish he would send it to me regularly by Headquarters, which I think might be done. I do not well know how this letter is to be conveyed but if the Opportunity be proper shall send you all the foreign News Papers I can procure & in the mean time with Compliments to Mrs Houston, I am Dr Sir your &c,  
Jno Witherspoon

Wednesday Jany 28. Since writing the above I am favored with yours of the 19 & 21 by Dr Bloomfield or Dr Tilen & take the Opportunity of their Return to add somewhat further.<sup>8</sup> I am obliged to you for the particular Detail of abuses which I know to be real & great & shall make every Use in my Power of the Information given. Particularly I hope soon to obtain a Request of Congress to the Legislature of our or perhaps all the States to take the Oversight of the Continental Officers in their Bounds.<sup>9</sup> This has been done already in particular Cases in N. York & Connecticut & from what happened in these Instances I am convinced there will be no Difficulty in obtaining it.

Pray let Dr Scudder come here without Delay. A Committee of 6 members of Congress are gone to Camp. There are at present 4 or five single Persons if any one of whom should be Sick there could not be a Quorum.

Dr. Rush & Dr Shippen are here just now & were yesternight & this forenoon examined before a Committee of whom I am Chairman as to the Abuses in the Hospitals.<sup>10</sup> No Pains will be Spared to rectify what is amiss as far as practicable. The unlucky movement you mention in December was the Consequence of an Order from Headquarters though a very improper one.

We have flying News to Day from Lancaster that the Decr. Packet is arrived after a short Passage. That Gen. How will not suffer any Letters to be delivered even to Officers. That Lord Chatham is come into the Ministry and that Part of the British Forces are to be sent to Jamaica but I cannot answer for the Truth of them. It is however certain that upwards of 7000 French Troops had actually arrived at the West Indies before the last Letter from our Agent their came



away. The Congress have now positively determined that Burgoyne and his Army shall not be suffered to embark till there is a formal Ratification of the Convention Sent from the Court of London & that all the Expences of his Troops shall be paid in hard money or Provisions. I inclose you the Proceedings of Congress relative to the Prisoners & mean to Send Some English News Papers not very late indeed but which you must keep & return by a safe Conveyance when it can be found. If Dr Scudder comes I shall probaby set off immediately but am very much pressed to Stay & in Case any Important Intelligence came from England or France it may seem to demand it & therefore I wish you would try to get Mr Faitoute to teach the few boys you have for a Week or two when you are obliged to go to the Assembly. I received no Letters from my Family by Dr Bloomfield which surprised me as well as disappointed me. Since therefore they are so very inattentive I wish upon any Opportunity offering you would put them in mind. I forgot indeed that I had a Short Letter from Mr Montgomery without any Date which was also the Case with his last but I had not a Syllable from any of them by Jos. Lane.

I am Dear Sir Yours affectionately, Jno Witherspoon

Thursday Jany 29 Postscript. I have just sent up for you all the English News Papers that are in this house. There were some come later but they are now so dispersed among the Members that it would be impossible to collect them. If I meet them I will send them by a future Opportunity. These however must be kept & returned. The Governor returned them lately.

RC (PHC).

<sup>1</sup> William Churchill Houston (1746–88), professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the College of New Jersey, served as deputy secretary to Congress in 1777, as a member of the New Jersey Assembly from 1777 to 1779, and as a New Jersey delegate to Congress in 1779–81, 1784–85. *Bio. Dir. Cong.*; and James McLachlan, *Princetonians 1748–1768: A Biographical Dictionary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 643–47.

<sup>2</sup> Not found.

<sup>3</sup> Congress took this action on December 19. See *JCC*, 9:1036. Burnett inserted an ellipsis after “New Jersey” as if to indicate he was omitting part of the letter between the end of this paragraph and the one beginning “I am sorry indeed,” but in fact there is nothing in the MS between these paragraphs. Burnett, *Letters*, 3:57.

<sup>4</sup> For a text of the proceedings of the convention of states from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania that met in New Haven from January 15 to 20, see *PCC*, item 33, fols. 329–65.

<sup>5</sup> See Witherspoon's Speech in Congress on the Saratoga Convention, January 8, 1778.

<sup>6</sup> Nathaniel Scudder took his seat in Congress on February 9, 1778. See *JCC*, 10:138.

<sup>7</sup> Isaac Collins' *New-Jersey Gazette*.

<sup>8</sup> Drs. Moses Bloomfield and James Tilton were surgeons serving in the military hospital at Princeton.

<sup>9</sup> Congress approved a resolution to this effect on February 9, 1778. See *JCC*, 10:139-40.

<sup>10</sup> See James Lovell to Samuel Adams, January 1, 1778, note 1.

## Committee at Camp Minutes of Proceedings

[January 28-31, 1778]

Present: Mr. Dana Chairman, Genl. Fulsom, Genl. Reid, Colo. Harvie, Mr. Morris.<sup>1</sup>

Committee met, wrote Letter to Clouthier Genl.<sup>2</sup> No. 1.

Genl. Washington appeared.

Petition from Captn. Durkee, Lieutt. Spaulding & Ensign Pierce referred to Committee 19 Jany was read. Petitioners to attend upon Notice to be given.<sup>3</sup>

Wrote Letter to Congress No. 2 recommending Genl. Schuyler as Quarter Master Genl. to which Genl. Fulsom dissents.<sup>4</sup>

29th Jany. Committee met the Genl. present as before.

Read the Genls. Representation of the State of the army &ca.<sup>5</sup>

Wrote Letter to Congress No 3 recommending Mr Wadsworth as Commissary Genl. of Purchases.<sup>6</sup>

Resolved that the Commissaries of Issues & Forage, the Quarter Master & Waggon Master General be requested immediately to make Return to this Committee of the several Assistants, Deputies &ca employed within their respective Departments together with the Pay & Appointments of such Assistants, Deputies &ca distinguishing therein those who are taken from the Army together with their Rank and Station there.

Sent it enclosed in circular Letter No 4 to the Persons mentioned in it.<sup>7</sup>

30th. Took into consideration the arrangemt. of the Battalions & settled it.<sup>8</sup>

Also considered half pay but not concluded.

31. Took into consideration the scarcity of provisions & wrote to Mr. Blane (No. 5).<sup>9</sup>

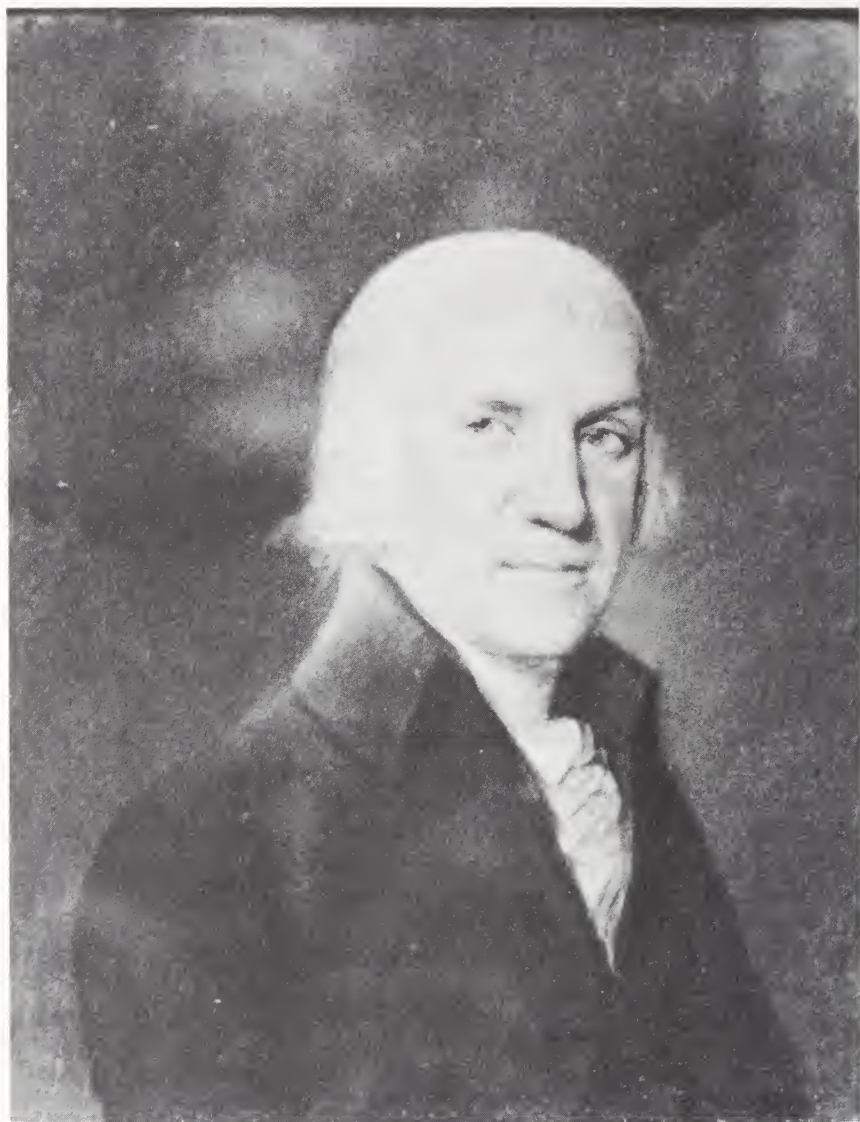
Received the return of persons employed in the Forage Departmt. (No. 6).

Recd. Return of Asst. Commissaries of Issues for the middle Departmt. (No. 7).

Recd. Clothier Gen. Lettr. (No. 8).<sup>10</sup>

MS (DLC). The minutes of the committee's proceedings at camp cover the period January 28 to March 12, 1778, and are printed in these volumes in seven installments under the dates January 28-31, February 2-7, 8-14, 16-20, 22-28, and March 1-7, 8-12, 1778. The minutes printed in this entry are in the hands of committee members Francis Dana and Gouverneur Morris.

<sup>1</sup> Congress appointed this committee in consequence of Washington's December 23, 1777, request that members of Congress or the Board of War confer



Francis Dana



with him on the serious organizational and supply problems plaguing the army. After debating a motion to comply with Washington's request on December 31, which was referred to a second committee and subsequently endorsed on January 10, Congress created a special conference committee consisting of three members of Congress and three members of the Board of War. The three congressmen, Francis Dana, Nathaniel Folsom, and Joseph Reed, were appointed January 10, and on January 12 Congress named Horatio Gates, Timothy Pickering, and Thomas Mifflin from the Board of War, adding John Harvie as a fourth member of Congress. As none of the members of the board were then in York and relations between Gates and Washington had already taken an ugly turn, Gates asked to be excused from the proffered assignment. Congress thereupon quickly agreed to a January 20 recommendation from the Board of War that Gates, Mifflin, and Pickering be excused and then appointed Charles Carroll of Carrollton and Gouverneur Morris in their places. See *JCC*, 9:1073-74, 10:39-41, 65-67; Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:197-98, 263-65; James Lovell's letters to Samuel Adams of January 20 and 22; and Robert Morris to Richard Peters, January 25, 1778, note 1.

On January 24, Dana and Folsom arrived at camp and by January 28 all of the members were there except Charles Carroll, who had returned home. Members of the committee remained at camp as late as March 16, 1778, although the minutes of their meetings end on March 12. Harvie left camp on February 19 and was back in Congress on the 27th, and Folsom and Dana were present to vote in Congress on March 24, but neither Reed nor Morris returned until the next month. See *JCC*, 10:205, 282, 319, 352; Committee at Camp Minutes of Proceedings, February 2-7, 1778; and Committee at Camp to George Clinton, March 16, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> The committee's January 28 letter to Clothier General James Mease has not been found.

<sup>3</sup> The petition of Capt. Robert Durkee, Lt. Simon Spaulding, and Ensign Timothy Pierce had been referred to the committee by Congress on January 19. The committee denied the petition after a hearing on February 3, 1778, but the subject of the petition is not known. See *JCC*, 10:60; and Committee at Camp Minutes of Proceedings, February 2-7, 1778.

<sup>4</sup> See Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, this date.

<sup>5</sup> General Washington's presentation to the committee discussing questions of military pensions, half-pay for officers, officer promotions and rankings, regimental establishments, the arrangement of the army, and the supply and special services' department, is in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:362-403.

<sup>6</sup> See Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, January 29, 1778.

<sup>7</sup> The committee sent the following circular over Dana's signature to Charles Stewart, the commissary general of issues, Clement Biddle, the commissary general of forage, Thomas Mifflin, the quartermaster general, and James Young, wagonmaster general of Pennsylvania. "Inclosed you will receive the resolution of the Committee of Congress now sitting in camp respecting your department of . . . I hope you will exert yourself to comply with it speedily, or the Committee will otherwise loose much time, and the public service suffer much injury." Peter Force Miscellany, DLC.

<sup>8</sup> For the committee's proposed arrangement of the army, see Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, February 5, 1778.

<sup>9</sup> Transcripts of chairman Dana's one-sentence letter to Deputy Commissary Ephraim Blaine—"The Committee of Congress now sitting in Camp, Request your immediate attendance here"—and a brief, unpublished covering letter from General Washington, also written on January 31 at Moore Hall, are in the Ephraim Blaine Letterbook, DLC.

<sup>10</sup> For the continuation of these minutes, see Committee at Camp Minutes of Proceedings, February 2-7, 1778.

## Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens

Sir

Camp at the Valley Forge Jan'y 28. 1778.

Upon Conference with the General on the Business recommended to us, it appears clearly that the Appointment of a Qr. Master Genl. is a Matter of great Importance & immediate Necessity. When we consider the State of the Department, & how much depends on filling it up in a proper Manner, we cannot help mentioning General Schuyler, & for the Benefit of the Service we could wish he would undertake it.<sup>1</sup> At the same Time we must observe it is by no Means clear, that he will accept of it; besides this, the Charge or Accusation he now lies under may demand some Attention. And the Rank he holds in the Army may be a strong Objection to place him in a Situation where Fortune may throw in his Hands the supreme Command. What Weight these Objections will have in Congress we cannot presume to say. They are great in the Minds of the Comm. But we are convinced that unless the Quarter Master Genls. Department be administered by very superiour Abilities, very little can be expected from our Exertions during the next Campaign.

The Committee are of Opinion that if Congress judge it inexpedient to make the Appointment we have suggested, no Time should be lost in acquainting the Committee of it, as they have some other Persons under Consideration, but cannot at present determine to whom they shall give the Preference on their Recommendation to Congress.

I am with all possible Respect by the Desire of the Committee, Sir,  
Your Obed. Hbbl Servt. Fra Dana Chairman at Camp

RC (DNA: PCC, item 33). In the hand of Joseph Reed and signed by Francis Dana.

<sup>1</sup> This letter recommending Philip Schuyler as Thomas Mifflin's replacement as quartermaster general reached Congress on January 31, when it was read just before Congress resumed consideration of a Board of War report on the quartermaster department. The board's report was adopted on February 5 and forwarded by President Laurens on February 7, but no mention was made of Schuyler. See *JCC*, 10:103, 126-27; and Henry Laurens to Francis Dana, February 7, 1778.

As late as February 12 the committee had received no word on Congress' decision regarding Schuyler and on that day it wrote to Laurens urging that a decision be made. Unofficial notice that Congress did not approve Schuyler's appointment arrived at camp by the next day in a letter from Jonathan Bayard Smith to Joseph Reed, which has not been found. But in his reply Reed reported: "I have since that Time received your Favour & find we are not to expect Schuyler for our Qr. Master. I feared it & am really sorry for it as it is a Matter of great Importance & we are now much at a Loss whom to propose." On February 25 Smith explained to Reed that Congress vetoed Schuyler's nomination because they did not trust his "intriguing mind," "unfriendly" temper, or ability to "conduct the great business." See Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, February 12; Joseph Reed to Jonathan Bayard Smith, February 13; and Jonathan Bayard Smith to Joseph Reed, February 25, 1778.

For further information on the committee's work on the quartermaster department and the ultimate appointment of Nathanael Greene as quartermaster general, see Joseph Reed to Jonathan Bayard Smith, February 19; Committee at Camp Minutes of Proceedings, February 22-28; and Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, February 25, 1778.

## Henry Laurens to the Marquis de Lafayette

Sir, York. 28th Jany. 1778.

Very late last Night (& it is now not daylight) I had the honour of receiving your favour by the hands of Colonel Duplessis.<sup>1</sup> I perused it very carefully & will pay the most honorable regard to the Contents. Forgive me Dear Marquis, for expressing some regret that you disclosed any part of them to a Gentleman<sup>2</sup> who though very sensible appears to me, & has given some proof, to be often guardless & incautious. You command me to keep parts of your Letter in confidence, be assured Sir, the whole will be held in that Esteem. If I can produce or procure any good from the knowledge which you are pleased to communicate, it shall be effected without disclosing the source.

I know from the Gentleman himself that General Conway is desirous of accompanying your Excellency upon the intended expedition & I am equally sure a rejection on your part will be received as a great disappointment. I took the liberty of intimating that it would be decent if not necessary to consult your Excellency upon the Question of who should be your second, but the thing had been not only preconcerted but apparently predetermined, indeed by some contrivance I was deprived of the honour, & the means of doing my Duty, of informing you Officially of the appointments.

As I do most sedulously avoid even the appearance of being a party Man, Your Excellency will the more readily excuse me for Speaking only in general terms. I think I can discern on which side Virtue & honour predominate as well as that where Craft & design are lurking under specious guise when perhaps the party themselves are blinded by prejudice & not sensible of their own errors, & as I judge charitably I would endeavour to act circumspectly even with such Characters, who divested of the spirit of party may be valuable Men in community.

I have taken such measures as I think cannot fail to bring Monsr. Capitaine & the Baggage forward. Major Polke who left the Army last Week has engaged not only to deliver my Letters but to exert his utmost endeavors that my direction & requests shall be duly executed.

I have the honour to be with the most sincere attacht.



<sup>1</sup> Lafayette's letter, which evidently was written around January 26, dealt mainly with his objections to Gen. Thomas Conway's appointment as his second in command for the projected Canadian expedition. See Lafayette, *Papers* (Idzerda), 1:253-56.

<sup>2</sup> Gouverneur Morris. *Ibid.*, p. 256.

## Henry Laurens to John Laurens

My Dear Son,

28th Jany 1778

I Received yours of 23d & of 26th Inst. last Night by Colo. Duplessis.<sup>1</sup> When you transmit me your plan for the measure of raising a Black Regiment I may be better able to judge & finally determine than I am at present. I have been cautious of Speaking openly of the project, but hitherto I have not heard one person approbate the Idea from the hints which I dropped in order to gain opinions & yet I will not say that the design might not be beneficially improved provided there would be found twenty more Men to share the reproach of Quixotism & to carry it into respectable execution. Your Regiment if you trusted to your own resources would not consist of more than forty Men perhaps not so many, in 300 Negroes there is a great proportion of Women & Children & if you have any dependence upon free Negroes *depend* upon it you will be deceived. If a Man had a *Bird* Plantation of 1200 & upwards he might venture a bold Stroke, have you consulted your General on this head? Have you considered that your kind intentions towards your Negroes would be deemed by them the highest cruelty, & that to escape from it they would flee into the Woods—that they would interpret your humanity to be an Exchange of Slavery, a State & circumstances not only tolerable but comfortable from habit, for an intolerable, taken from their Wives & Children & their little Plantations to the Field of Battle where Loss of Life & Loss of Limbs must be expected by every one every day.

I could offer a Thousand other things for your consideration but they are not necessary at this time nor indeed will the time allow me. You shall have my honest sentiments & then do as you please.<sup>2</sup>

General Conway has been twice say thrice with me, the second time he consulted me on the propriety of printing, I'll call it, the Letter. I replied by every dissuasive argument. He did not offer to shew me the Letter, but I have since seen it in the hands of a *good Sort of* Man, & 'tis possible the poison will by such means be disseminated. I cannot commend the Liberality of this proceeding, but I take it for granted he has first sent a Copy to the General, in that case there will be less crime or no crime in shewing it to his friends. From this consideration I say nothing of the Contents.

Yesterday I read to Congress a Letter from Mr Govr Morris

recommending General McDougal to be the Marquis's second,<sup>3</sup> in the afternoon General Conway called upon me to take leave & entered immediately upon his Journey to the Northward. "There was not a moment to be lost" & a Resolution is framed ordering Bills of Exchange to be drawn to a certain amount to be put into the hands of Marquis delafayette *or any other* Commanding Officer of the Troops intended to be Sent to Canada.<sup>4</sup> These are facts which you & I may think of, but I have neither time nor inclination to paraphrase, which I would do & boldly too if I were on the floor.

Adieu my Dear Friend. May God keep your heart pure &ca.

[P.S.] A Taylor has cut off as much of your Scarlet as will make he says a Wascoat for 6 feet 3 inches.

James has in vain ransacked the whole Town for Buff Cloth. The remainder of your Scarlet is only fit for a Coat & Wascoat for you or me.

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> The former letter is in Simms, *Laurens Army Correspondence*, pp. 109-12.

<sup>2</sup> John Laurens defended his plan for raising a black regiment in a spirited letter he wrote to his father on February 2, 1778. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-18.

<sup>3</sup> Gouverneur Morris' January 26 letter to Laurens was read in Congress on January 28. *JCC*, 10:95.

<sup>4</sup> See *JCC*, 10:96.

## Marine Committee to James Nicholson

Sir January 28th 1778

We have received your favour of the 23d instant and are sorry that your late effort to get to Sea had failed. The great service that might be done to the States by your Ship being out, has urged us to wish much for that event and altho you have been unsuccessful in your late attempt yet we would not have that prevent your making an other trial and as we are perfectly satisfied that your best endeavours has been used, we doubt not a continuance of them will be kept up until the business is happily Accomplished.<sup>1</sup>

We observe what you say respecting the term of entry of some of your Crew being expired. We would have you if possible engage them again allowing them the bounty.

The Navy Board at Bordenton in A Letter of the 13th instant writes that they had collected 19 or 20 Seamen belonging to the Navy and would send them forward to Baltimore as soon as a waggon could be had to take their baggage and Provisions. These men we expect are now nearly got down and you may order them on board your ship. This supply with such of your present Crew as you may reinlist will keep the Virginia well manned.

We authorize you to provide A Small fast sailing Tender<sup>2</sup> to preceede your ship down the Bay to give notice of the situation and motions of the enemies Vessels as we formerly directed & we trust you will embrace the first opportunity of pushing out. Confiding in your vigilance & good conduct we wish you success & are Sir,

yr. hble Servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the *Virginia* was captured before she reached open sea. See Marine Committee to James Nicholson, December 2, 1777, note.

<sup>2</sup> For Congress' efforts to borrow a tender from Maryland, see Francis Lewis to Thomas Johnson, February 1, 1778.

## Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens

Sir                      No. 3                      Camp at the Valley Forge January 29, 1778

In the Course of Inquiry into the State of the civil Departments of the Army, that of the Commissary General of Purchases has attracted very considerable Attention. That there have been very great Failures in the necessary supply of Provisions is unquestionable, but we are not so clear, as to the Causes which have produced this Evil. Many have been assigned, it is unnecessary to ennumerate them as we understand Congress have made Inquiry into this Department, the Result of which has not been favourable to the Capacity & Abilities of the Gentlemen now in Office. We beg leave to acquaint Congress that our Inquiries into this Department have rather confirmed than Changed this Opinion. We are therefore induced to recommend to the earliest Attention of Congress the Choice of a suitable Successor, a Man of Abilities, extensive Connection & Influence. We have not been able to fix upon any Person in our Opinion so proper as Jeremiah Wadsworth Esqr. of Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> It is said he is about to go to some part of Europe, but at the same Time it is probable he would accept the Office if honoured with it. We therefore submit it to Congress whether it will not be advisable immediately to proceed to the Choice of this Office, & if Mr. Wadsworth stands approved to give him the earliest Notice least he should leave the Country unacquainted with the Appointment or be so far engaged in other Business that he cannot accept it.

I have the Honour to be on Behalf of the Committee, Sir, Your most Obedt. & very Hble Servt.                      Fra Dana per Order

RC (DNA: PCC, item 33). In the hand of Joseph Reed and signed by Francis Dana.

<sup>1</sup> The committee's recommendation that Jeremiah Wadsworth (1743-1804), former commissary of Connecticut's military forces, replace William Buchanan as commissary general of purchases was read in Congress on February 4. On



February 9 Congress directed President Laurens to ask Wadsworth to meet with them in York. Wadsworth arrived in York on March 29, and after lengthy discussions hinging on a schedule of commissions to be allowed the commissaries, Wadsworth was appointed commissary general of purchases on April 9. Wadsworth served in this position until he resigned on December 4, 1779. See *JCC*, 10:121, 141, 293, 303, 324, 327-28; Eliphalet Dyer to Wadsworth, February 10 and March 10; Abraham Clark to Wadsworth, March 29, 1778; and *DAB*.

## Francis Dana to Elbridge Gerry

Dear Sir,

Moor-Hall Jany. 29th. 1778

Genl. Fulsome informing me that you are very desirous of seeing a schedule of the Cargo of the brig Symetry captured at Wilmington I have enclosed one given me by Colo. Biddle which he supposes to be correct. We yesterday forwarded to Congress our recommendation of Genl. Schuyler for Quarter Master General.<sup>1</sup> Genl. Fulsome was vehemently against it. We cou'd not make him say *Schyler* unless to curse him. The Committee were convinced of the absolute necessity of filling that office with a person who thoroughly understands the duties of it, and cou'd not find one equal by any means to Schyler. They were nevertheless persuaded of the weight of certain objections against him, which they leave for the consideration of Congress. Some of us execrate him as a Genl. tho we think him well qualified for a Quarter Master. This day we have recommended Mr. Wadsworth for Commissary Genl. If you approve of him, pray push forward the election and do not let so valuable a man withdraw from his Country, at a time we meet with so great difficulty to find proper characters for the public service. We shall go on to do all the good in our power, tho' I expect our measures will be highly censured by some. My object shall be *direct*, and I leave the rest to Heaven. I think I have already made some discovery touching certain characters here, and am most firmly persuaded of the propriety, nay the necessity of appointing some members of Congress constantly to attend the principal army, and especially all their councils, if you wish thoroughly to know your General Officers. With my present information I can't but lament the new expedition into Canada. Keep a strict eye upon *new* institutions,<sup>2</sup> or I fear some capital difficulties will arise. Do not let Congress throw away their authority; 'tis hard to repossess it. I am extremely anxious that Colo. Palfrey, after waiting so long, shou'd be sent off with so small a sum. He must speedily be supplied with at least 500,000 more. For God's sake attend to the affairs of the Treasury. I hope the business with Mr. Rittenhouse which I left in charge with Mr. Hillegas is in a good way. Don't play at small games, yet *cover your design*. You will understand me. You know my sentiments upon this subject. I am

confirmed in them. But I forget I am speaking to a great Financier. Colo. Biddle tells me that being much pressed for Cash, Genl. Washington this week drew a warrant in his favor upon the Pay Master for 10,666  $\frac{2}{3}$  which he endorsed to Colo. Bayard who will expect to receive the cash, or perhaps Loan Office Certificates at York Town. It was for so much cash borrowed by Colo. Biddle as he says (upon consultation with Genl. Washington) of Colo. Bayard. Biddle desires it may be charged to Colo. Palfrey, and that the Treasury would inform him of it, who will then charge Biddle with it. He thinks it may be answered by certificates. Please to give my best regards to Mr. Ellery & Mr. Lovell & any other my good friends. We are too closely employed to admit of my writing them. I have received a letter from Mr. Ellery and beg you would acquaint him that his daughter is much better.<sup>3</sup> As to Mr. Lovell's request abt Mr. J. Adams's Chest I know not at present how to come at it, or where to send it when I find where it is. I should be glad of some further directions about it. Mr. Adams *goes* it seems.<sup>4</sup> This matter is no secret. I was told of it at Lancaster as coming from Mr. Morris. What do you think of my going Secretary?<sup>5</sup> Good night to you. Your's &c.

F.Da—

RC (DLC photostat).

<sup>1</sup> See Committee at Camp to Henry Laurens, January 28, 1778.

<sup>2</sup> A reference to the newly reconstituted Board of War.

<sup>3</sup> Ellery's letter has not been found. Dana was married to Ellery's daughter Elizabeth.

<sup>4</sup> That is, as American commissioner to Paris.

<sup>5</sup> Dana was eventually appointed John Adams' secretary on September 29, 1779, when he was elected "secretary to the minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty of peace and a treaty of commerce with Great Britain." See *JCC*, 15:1128.

## Henry Laurens to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

29th Jany 1778

I had the honour of writing to your Excellency the 27th Inst.<sup>1</sup> by Messenger Barry.

At the request of the Honorable J.B. Smith Esquire I transmit with this Six Blank Commissions, Instructions & Bonds for private Ships of War—when the Bonds are Executed by the Commander of any such Vessel & one sufficient surety—to your Excellency & two or more of the Executive Council of the State, you will be pleased to return them to Congress.

When more of this kind of Document is wanted a supply shall be sent upon the first Notice.

I am with great regard &c.

[P.S.] Vessels under 50 Tons to be Commanded by Lieutenants & penalty of the Bond 5000 Dollars; above 50 Tons Captains & 10000 Dollars.

LB (DNA: PCC, item 13).

<sup>1</sup>In this letter Laurens merely acknowledged receipt of a January 26 letter from the Pennsylvania Council and transmitted congressional resolves of December 30 on disaffected Americans and of January 21 on prisoners of war. PCC, item 13, fol. 157. See also *JCC*, 9:1069, 10:74-82; and *Pa. Archives*, 1st ser. 6:208.

## Marine Committee to John Barry

Sir

January 29th 1778

We having agreed to employ the Pinnace and Barges belonging to the Frigates and the Barge taken up by Captain Josiah in the River Delaware on a Cruize in Said River under your command We hereby empower you to receive such war-like Stores, Provisions & other Stores from the Navy Board, and to employ such Continental Navy Officers not in Actual Service and to collect such a number of Men as you shall think necessary for officering, manning, victualling and equipping said Boats.<sup>1</sup> As you will have frequent occasion to land on each Side of the Delaware during your Cruize you will take effectual care to restrain your officers & men from plundering, insulting or in any way treating ill the Inhabitants of the Country. Humanity, good Policy and your reputation demand that they should be treated with kindness—you may want supplies from them and their assistance in moving to a place of safety such effects as you may capture. You will therefore attend particularly to this Instruction. We have directed the Navy Board to furnish you with every thing necessary for equipping your little fleet and with money to procure supplies for your Crews as occasion may require. You will take account of all goods of every kind which you may Capture and prevent their being pilfered. As it will be necessary that you should take with you or appoint on Shore some honest faithful persons who are well acquainted with the Country and will undertake to procure waggons for the speedy removal to a place of safety and take care of such goods as you may Capture—you will attend particularly to this necessary point and employ such persons. You will give immediate notice to General Washington of such stores as you may Capture which are necessary for the use of the Army. We would have you Sink or otherwise destroy the Hulls of all such Vessels as you may take which cannot be removed to some place of Safety. The Vessels which you take and preserve and the goods which you Capture must be libelled in the Court of Admiralty in the State into which they



are carried—you will therefore employ some suitable Attorney to libell for the same.

The Success of your Cruize depending upon your dispatch, activity, prudence and valour we hope you will exert the utmost of your abilities on this occasion. Write to us frequently and particularly of your proceedings. Wishing you success, We are sir, yr humble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the exploits of Barry and his barge flotilla on the Delaware during February and March 1778, see William Bell Clark, *Gallant John Barry* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1938), pp. 140–53.

## Marine Committee to the Middle Department Navy Board

Gentlemen

January 29th. 1778

We have directed Captain Barry to employ the Pinnace and Barges belonging to the Frigates and the Barge taken by Captain Josiah in annoying the enemies Vessels in their Passage up and down the Delaware and to employ such a number of Continental Navy officers now out of Service, and collect such a number of men as he may think necessary to officer and man the Fleet of Boats under his command.

We desire that you would deliver to him such War-like Provisions and other necessaries as he may think necessary for equipping and victualling the Said Boats.

As it appears to us that in this way we may greatly annoy the enemy and collect considerable quantities of Provisions and other necessaries for the use of the Army and the Country, and as every thing depends upon dispatch we earnestly request that you will give him all the Assistance in your [*power*] in equipping and moving the Boats across the land and in every other thing that respects the execution of this business. As Captain Barrys station cannot from the nature of the business be fixed and he may occasionally by his distance and situation down the River want supplies, we would have you furnish him with such sums of Money as he may want during his Cruize. You will have the Barge taken by Captain Josiah valued before fitted to make her Continental property.

We are Gentlemen, your humble servants

LB (DNA: PCC Miscellaneous Papers, Marine Committee Letter Book).

## Committee of Commerce to Robert Morris

Sir

York January 30th. 1778

We have received your favours of the 19th, 22nd, 23rd & 24th instant<sup>1</sup> and returning thanks for the Contents we shall reply to them in course.

In Answer to yours of the 19th, We received the Letters Sent down to you for your Opinion, and think with you that Mr. Steward is a very honest active Man. We have wrote him to have the Brigantine chartered by Mr Lux Surveyed,<sup>2</sup> and should she be deemed insufficient to perform the Voyage, of course the Charter party will be void. We have taken Steps which we hope will prove effectual for procuring Materials for the New Brigantine at Baltimore, and as Capt. Thomas Read has taken the command and undertaken the fitting of her out, we expect she will soon be got ready for the Sea.<sup>3</sup> In due Time we shall order Mr Steward to Load her with Tobacco.

We shall be glad to receive the Account of the Tobacco on hand in Maryland & Virginia.

As you concur in Opinion with us that the Building of Small fast sailing Vessels for Commercial purposes would be an eligible plan, we wish to have your sentiments, as to the Burthen, Construction, Rigging &c of those Vessels, keeping in mind that the principal design is to ship with some degree of safety Tobacco from Cheseapeak Bay. We think they might be built at the Continental Ship yards out of the small Timber that will be left from Ships of war.

Before receipt of yours of the 22nd, Mr. Lux had advised the arrival of Capt Buffington and his having taken measures for bringing the Goods up to Baltimore. Mr Lewis being now there<sup>4</sup> he will give directions to have them sent forward. We have given the Board of War an Account of Captain Lambs Cargo, and we think it would be proper in future to furnish that Board with Lists of all articles that may arrive, suitable for the army, and they to communicate the same to the Officers of the different Departments.

We approve of your selling the Eight casks Indico taken out of the Brigantine Andrea Doria and brought up to Lancaster if you think it best so to do.

To yours of the 23d we shall only say that we shall do justice in everything respecting Mr Sargentons Brigantine.

We come to reply to yours of the 24th. We agree that it is of much Importance to furnish Mr. John Ross with the means of repaying the Money the Commissioners at Paris have advanced, as well as for his own advances, and for that purpose we fully approve of your altering the Bills of Loading of Some of the Cargoes of Tobacco now on board Vessels in Maryland and Virginia (formerly consigned to Mr Thomas Morris) and taking New Bills of Loading Consigned to Mr Ross or his order to be disposed of by him and the proceeds applied to the

purposes afsd. This we Authorize you to do, and as Mr. Ross has transacted his business in A Satisfactory Manner, you will please to write and Sign a Suitable Letter to him (which we will also sign) directing him to dispose of those Cargoes &c and should any balance remain in his hands to invest the same in Goods suitable for the army, and Ship them for the Continent, observing to him also that the Vessels which carry the Tobacco and are chartered to return to the States should bring back salt.<sup>5</sup>

By Express yesterday we had account of the arrival at Edenton in North Carolina of Two Vessels with 129 Bales of Cloths, Blankets, Hose, Shoes &c shipped by Monsr. Currabasse at Cape Francois; and Captain Morrison from Martinico touched at Edenton and landed 9 Bales of goods shipped by Mr Bingham. The Brigantine Success which we ordered round from Boston is also arrived at that port. We can see no better way than to order the purchase of Cargoes of Tobacco for those Vessels even at the high price it now bears, as waiting on that to be transported from Virginia would occasion great delay.

We are Sir, with much respect, Your Most Obedt servts,  
William Ellery  
James Forbes

P.S. Inclosed are the Coppies of A Letter from General Hand, of an Estimate of Provisions of Colo. Morgan and of A Letter from Mr Willing. The originals have been laid before Congress who were Startled at the Expence, which is like to arise on this Voyage or expedition and have postponed the Consideration thereof. As we were not in Congress when this Adventure was undertaken and know nothing about it excepting what appears by the Letters to the Governor of New Orleans & Louisiana to our Agent there and the Instructions given to Mr Willing and are no Judges respecting Colo. Morgans estimate of the Provisions we should be glad to have your Sentiments on this Matter as soon as possible.<sup>6</sup>

We hope you will be able to compleat the Books of the Secret Committee in A Short Time so that they and the papers may be laid before Congress, and a Commercial Committee appointed upon the Plan proposed by you or one Similar to it, for we are fully convinced from the little we have seen that such A plan is necessary and that we are unequal to the Important business Committed to our charge.<sup>7</sup>

William Ellery  
James Forbes

RC (PYHi). In the hand of John Brown and signed by Ellery and Forbes.

<sup>1</sup> None of these Morris letters to the committee has been found.

<sup>2</sup> The committee's letter to Stephen Steward has not been found.

<sup>3</sup> See Marine Committee to Thomas Read, January 13, 1778.



<sup>4</sup> See Francis Lewis to Thomas Johnson, February 1, 1778, note 1.

<sup>5</sup> See *JCC*, 11:738-40; Robert Morris to the Committee of Commerce, February 17; and Committee of Commerce to John Ross, February 21, 1778.

<sup>6</sup> See *JCC*, 10:101, 184. Edward Hand's January 17 letter to the committee and the enclosures by George Morgan and James Willing concerning the provisioning of Willing's West Florida expedition are in *PCC*, item 159, fols. 402-4, 431, 435-36. See also the letters of the Committee of Commerce to New Orleans agent Oliver Pollock, November 21, 1777, note 1, and to Robert Morris, February 21, 1778, note 4.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Morris' proposed plan for reorganizing the Committee of Commerce has not been found but it was probably prepared in connection with Morris' work during 1777 on the committee that had been charged with preparing "a plan for the better conducting the executive business of Congress, by boards composed of persons, not members of Congress." Although reconstituted in December 1778, the Committee of Commerce continued to consist of congressional members. See *JCC*, 6:1041-42, 12:1216-17; and Committee of Commerce to Robert Morris, February 21, 1778, note 6.

## Henry Laurens to Horatio Gates

Sir York Town 30 Jany [1778]. 9 oClo PM.

I am this moment returned from Congress & tis the first I have had for replying to your Note of this date brought to me when the House was in debate.

I shall order the Bills of Exchange to be furnished the Marquis delafayette or the Officer commanding an expedition into Canada to be made out to Morrow Morning & deliver them to the Marquis.<sup>1</sup>

I am with great Regard, Sir, Your most Obedt. servant,

Henry Laurens, President of Congress

RC (NjMoHP).

<sup>1</sup> Among the Laurens Papers at ScHi is a slightly mutilated letter that Laurens apparently wrote to a member of the Board of Treasury on January 31: "In pursuance of the above Resolve will you be so obliging as to Cause 6 Sets of Bills of Exchange to be made out agreeable to the specimen endors'd. I do not know [if] this comes within the sphere of your [. . .] Office Duty—but I think it will be [. . .] to Debit the Commanding Officer in the Treasury Books. For this reason as [well] as because you have a Clerk who [writes] a better hand than mine I trouble you [relying?] at the same time on your good [. . .] to [. . .] me." This letter was written just below a copy of the January 28 resolve directing the commander of the expedition to Canada to be "furnished with bills of exchange drawn by the President of Congress on the commissioners of the United States in France to the amount of thirty thousand French livres." On the back of the letter, moreover, there is a specimen bill of exchange dated "31 January 1778." See also *JCC*, 10:96.

## Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais

30th January 1778

A whole Month has rolled over Since I threw my thoughts upon the preceeding pages. I have just passed my Eye over them again & determined imperfect as they are to submit them to your candor. I could add a long & affecting paragraph on the Subject of Non Representation, I could tell you truly the House has been reduced to nine States represented in Units—that we have Sometimes been Stagnant from a want of Members & oftner running whole days into weeds of unmatured conversations from a want of able Members. I could tell you that thousands & Millions have been wasted & are wasting, from a want of proper Men & sufficient members to attend the affairs of the Treasury, most amazingly in Arrears. Hence, peculators in all the Classes have gained time to learn & have now the audacity to boast, that Congress fall short of coercive powers for compelling them to fair reckonings. I could tell you of consequences infinitely worse than the loss of Money, aye, than the loss of as many millions as we have Issued. We have lost the opportunity of driving the Enemy from Philadelphia this Winter, but if what I have already said will not awaken you, you will not be persuaded by all the tellings & all the exhortations I am capable of. Go on, slumber in golden dreams till calamity shall overwhelm you & till your faces shall be covered with shame & disgrace.

For many articles of Intelligence I refer you to papers & Letters which will accompany this & to Notes on them to which I specially refer.

With respect to my private affairs under your Eye I refer to your friendship. 'Tis utterly impossible for me to think fully of them without neglecting the Duties of my Office, which I will not do for any private consideration, but I will try to acknowledge & briefly answer all your late Letters, next opportunity, if possible in another sheet by this.

I wrote you a very long & as I think Interesting Letter the 10th September which you have not acknowledged, I am desirous of knowing whether you received it. My Love & Compliments to Mrs. Gervais & the Children, to Mr. and Mrs. Manigault & to each & all my friends.

I remain with sincere Respect & affection &ca.

## Henry Laurens to Robert Howe

Dear General,

30th Jany 1778.

While I was confined in Bed by the Gout your several Letters of the 3d & 4th November public, & 28th private,<sup>1</sup> were brought to me, & just now are come to hand one of the 11th & three of the 12th December.<sup>2</sup>

My confinement was no impediment to the progress of the first mentioned. They were duly presented to Congress & referred to the Board of War, where they have lain asleep upwards of a Month. I shall embrace the first proper moment for presenting all that is public of your New Commands. I have such a multitude of papers to lay before the House as will engross two or three next Meetings, & as I mean by the force of what you have now charged me with to raise the former from the dead I must not make the attempt in a Croud.

I perceive My Dear General you scold a little, you have reason, but direct your resentment properly, it will not light upon the present Epitome of a shadow of a *proper* Representation of the Maganimous, Free & Independent thirteen United States of America, consisting very often of less than thirteen Men.

I have scarcely patience to go one step further. No my Dear fellow Citizen, it will rise into the highest reproaches against those August States, who have acted, & possibly may be whipped, like Children. It has been impossible for the present number, & God Wot the present abilities, to go through more businesses than have been accomplished for two or three Months past—much of it you will allow of the highest importance, some very well done & an infinite deal more than appears at once in your Sothern Latitudes. I am often angry with these Scholars of mine but I cannot allow anybody else to be so. I think they have performed wonders—much however, from a want of proper numbers & proper Geniuses, has been left undone, a little to the mortification of your self & other honest Zealous Individuals—much to the diminution & detriment of our Treasury—to the distress & death of our poor Soldiers & to Speak plain & melancholy truth I am prepared to hear & to bear the addition of the Route of our Army, where we have not above Six thousand effectives altho we are paying upwards of 20000 & the Marquis Fayette assures me if General Howe comes out of the City & attacks our Camp, General Washington must quit it precipitately & give him the Country or be cut to peices & leave it. All these & many more concomitant evils spring from a neglect of Representation latterly, & from shameful Idleness, caballing & party plotting before *they* left Philadelphia. Chide therefore, fellow Sufferer, Chide the 13 United States, all fallen asleep & wrapped in Golden dreams—and in the keenest terms let us reprove the Country which we call Native. Now for God's sake do not be in a hurry & run into the other extreme &



send Men only in quantity. Have the Strictest attention to quality—search for Men of vigilance, diligence, integrity, fortitude, knowledge (& address—and you search long in So Carolina for such—I think not—but you may be long searching for persuasives to induce them chearfully & heartily to leave their plans & schemes & pursuits for adding House to House & feild to feild.

I lament in the present moment for my Country's sake my own deficiency in those necessary qualifications for an able Delegate, but while you Command me to stay here, such powers as nature & Industry have vested me with shall be exerted in the Characters of Delegate & President for the benefit of our great Cause & I will particularly attend to your Concerns & give them motion & bring them to effect with all possible dispatch of which I shall have the honor of writing again in a few days—nor will I be inattentive to the article of Rank. I have scattered in different hands in Charles Town all the News of the time good & Bad, from whence & probably from better authority you will learn it—fast as pen in my hand could slide have the preceeding Lines been written—conscious of well meaning, & confident your candour forbids anxiety for the fate of what is not so well arranged or expressed.

I am with great Respect &ca.

LB (ScHi). Addressed: "Majr. General Robert Howe, Charles Town."

<sup>1</sup> On December 29 Congress had read and referred to the Board of War one November 3 and two November 4 letters from Gen. Robert Howe, the commander of the southern military department. *JCC*, 9:1064. The November 3 letter and one of the November 4 letters are in *PCC*, item 160, fols. 400–406. Both pointed out serious weaknesses in the defenses of Georgia, prompting Congress on January 15 to appoint a committee "to take into consideration the State of Georgia" which submitted a report to the delegates on February 15. See *JCC*, 10:53, 120, 159–65. Transcripts of Howe's other November 4 letter to Laurens as well as the one of November 28 are in the Laurens Papers, ScHi.

<sup>2</sup> Although these last four letters are not in *PCC*, a November 29 letter from Howe to Laurens which the president received on December 21 is in item 160, fol. 414, of the collection.

## Henry Laurens to George Read

Sir,

York Town Jany 1778

Upon receipt of your favour of the 18th I transmitted by Capt. Lewis twenty blank Commissions for private Ships of War together with Instructions & Bonds, the latter when duly Executed you will be pleased to return to Congress. I have received no particular Command in reply to the Letter abovementioned nor to a former of the 25th November.<sup>1</sup>

Your Honour will find under cover with this Nine Acts of Congress

of the following dates together with 5 extra Copies of the two last mentioned.

of the 31st July	}	1777
17th		
22d		
3d		
29th		
31st	}	1778
8th January		
19th December '77		
21st Jany '78	}	1778

These are the whole which have been sent to me from the Secretary's Office & I have waited much too long even for these.

If there are any deficiencies I shall soon discover & supply them by the aid of Mr. McKean whom I esteem a valuable acquisition in Congress. The House has of late been so reduced, it has on some days shewn more than barely nine States on the floor represented by Units. This Criminal delinquency in the States may very speedily work our disgrace, for whatever Evils may betide our Army at Valley forge will very fairly be imputed to a want of sufficient numbers of able Citizens in Congress. There have not been for some Months past Members equal in number, to the common drudgery of Committees.

You would be as deeply affected Sir as I am were I to give you a detail of consequent Evils. The certain loss of Millions of Money is in my Estimation far from being the most deplorable.

You will also receive Inclosed a Letter directed to Your Honor which I found a few days ago in a Window of the Court House.

I am with great Esteem & Regard, Honorable Sir, Your obedient & humble servt,  
Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

RC (DeHi). Addressed: "The Honorable George Read Esquire, Vice President, Delaware."

<sup>1</sup> In his January 18 letter to Laurens, Read had asked for Congress' assistance in complying with requests "for Commissions by the Owners of divers small Armed Vessels, now fitting out within this State on A design of Cruizing within the River and Bay of Delaware to intercept such of the Enemies Vessels as may fall within their reach or Power." PCC, item 70, fol. 643. In his November 25 letter, on the other hand, he had asked for a listing of "what requisitions have been made by Congress upon [Delaware] from time to time." Ibid., fols. 639, 642. On the verso of Read's November 25 letter, Secretary Thomson made a preliminary list of recent congressional requisitions on Delaware as well as other states, and Laurens sent a fuller list in his present letter to Read.

## Henry Laurens to John Rutledge

Dear Sir,

30th Jan'y 1778.

I have been in possession of Your Excellency's very obliging favor of the 29th November full forty days & it has not been in my power to make an earlier acknowledgement & even now, driven by regret & mortification from reflecting upon so long a delay, I am forced to snatch a minute & write in a hurry without hope of paying all that respect which is due to it.

I have in a public Letter assigned several reasons which have occasioned the extraordinary detention of my present dispatches; to these I may add two—which considered together will reflect highly on the thirteen United States for their continued inattention to their most important Interests, but with most severity upon So. Carolina.

I had long waited for a determination upon several important articles contained in Letters from Major General Howe, for the appointment of a Brigadier in Colo. Isaac Huger & latterly I have been from day to day amused by expectation of a Report from the Board of War on Capt. De Brahm's application for Rank, in hopes of transmitting a Majors Commission & retaining that valuable Officer in our Country.<sup>1</sup> I may go on waiting a Month *longer* for aught I know with equal effect & therefore I dispatch the bearer Philemon Bristol a Light Horseman<sup>2</sup> with such papers as are ready & promise your Excellency to follow him by another as soon as I can collect sufficient matter.

I will not say the Board of War could not in all this time have finished the businesses alluded to, but considering the multitude of important affairs which they have transacted I dare not reproach them with neglect. Consider Sir, the Circumstances of Congress, left to reap the fruits of former shameful Idleness & dissipation of time & to correct the effects of some very gross & some very wanton errors of these times with the aid of about 21 Members, often 15, sometimes barely 9 States on the floor represented by as many persons. I need say no more to your Excellency who are so well acquainted with business to shew that these are not sufficient men in number to perform the ordinary drudgery of Committees. The Mornings are filled up till 10 or 11 o Clock in those Circles—if we can then make a House we sit till 1 or 2 & never take more than two hours respite, then again till 8 or 9. What time will this allow for refreshment, recollecting & dispatch of business out of Doors—to me very little more than what I delve out of the Night, because my Mornings are unavoidably expended in giving answers to incessant applications. From such deficiency in Representation much more Evils arise than the delay of Commissions. The Respondents for “he to be accountable” have been so long in Arrears as to have learned & in some Instances so impudent as to boast Congress have not power to Compel



them to Accot. From this & some other circumstances connected with the Treasury, Millions of Dollars appear to have been misapplied & lost for which the honest Citizen must by & by be severely Taxed, but even peculation & Squandering are not the most pernicious effects of a want of full & able Representation. Our Treasury is exhausted & we have neither time nor genius for replenishing except by continued Emissions Million after Million & the demand for Money is become so enormous the Press can scarcely keep pace with it—the Commissary's department, the Quarter Master general's, the Commercial Committee, the Clothier general's & in a word almost every department ill conducted or in distraction—and it is too visible that Congress itself from its number & quantity is very lightly esteemed, this alone comprehends all Evils.

Our Army has been long in the most alarming State on the point of disbanding from a want of provisions, more than once, not a "hoof" as General Washington expressed himself nor a Barrel of flour in Camp. Eight & forty hours have passed over without a Ration Issued, & we are but now beginning to lay up Magazines for next Campaign. Our worthy General has been treated with slights which are shocking to Men of feeling & gratitude which he has borne with a fortitude only to be found in a determined Patriot.

I could fill all these pages with complaints of Evils which might have been averted by a full Congress—or half the Number of sensible diligent Men. Even the most alarming of all our distresses a dissention in the Army, particularly between the Commander in Chief & the president of the Board of War heightened by the intrigues of General Conway might have been healed before this day. Philadelphia or New York might have been again in our possession—now the recovery of the former is talked of as a possible event to happen in the Month of April. In the mean time the total dispersion of our Army reduced to 6000 Men is held as a probable event either by an attack from the Enemy or from a want of provision.

Having intimated the unhappy jealousies subsisting between General Washington & General Gates, let me afford Your Excellency the satisfaction of knowing that in conversation with the latter I find him heartily disposed to a reconciliation. I have no doubt but that the same disposition would upon inquiry be found on the other side. Nothing I believe is wanting but proper persons to interpose for establishing harmony the effect of which would soon fall heavy upon the heads of our Enemies, but where are the men for this delicate & important service, not at present in Congress, a conclusion which fills me with grief.

Had Congress been but half full, but I will trouble your Excellency no more on this disagreeable subject. I will sum up the whole with this observation, that a proper Representation of the States, would probably have produced us on this day a near prospect of peace &

Independency. The shameful deficiency has reduced us to a low Ebb, we are become the Contempt of Tories the Treasury is too much the prey of designing loose Men, the Public loaded with an immense debt, peace appears at a great distance, Independence beyond it, the Road perplexed & stained with blood.

Nine Brigadier Generals have made an humble Representation of injury which they feel from an undue promotion of General Conway; an humble Petition has also appeared from eight valuable meritorious Colonels complaining of this promotion of Lieutt. Colo. Wilkinson to the Rank of Brigadier.<sup>3</sup> Both are treated with the Contempt of lying on the Table, such a display of Wisdom & Justice may provoke a resentment exceedingly detrimental to the service.<sup>4</sup>

LB (ScHi).

<sup>1</sup> On February 12 Congress resolved that "Captain de Brahm, who has heretofore acted as an engineer in the State of South Carolina, be appointed an engineer in the continental establishment, with the rank of major in the armies of the United States." JCC, 10:63, 150.

<sup>2</sup> Laurens underlined these last six words in the LB and wrote above them: "this & other Letters for Charlestown sent by Joseph Gray."

<sup>3</sup> See JCC, 10:63.

<sup>4</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Laurens to Rutledge, February 3, 1778. Laurens also wrote brief letters this day to Governor Rutledge and Gov. John Treutlan of Georgia, transmitting December 19 and January 21 resolves on prisoners of war. PCC, item 13, fols. 159-60; and JCC, 9:1036-37, 10:74-82.

## Daniel Roberdeau to Thomas Wharton

Sir,

York Town Jany. 30th. 1778

This day a Letter from Genl. Washington to the Board of War was before Congress, respecting *their* detention of the British Officers and Waggoners of which he disapproved, as it was a measure stipulated betwixt him & Genl. Howe;<sup>1</sup> nor does he disapprove the number of men in the escort, although it exceeds the Stipulation, as he thinks they were as few as might be expected on the occasion, therefore they are ordered to proceed with their charge. The Letter was returned to the Board of War with Instructions to enquire into the Conduct of the Escort in our State, and I suppose you will be applied to. This brought on some debate and a Resolution approving your conduct, but as it did not touch the main point, the indecent interference of the two Members of Congress, they being absent, the plaudit was at least suspended by the previous question. However the sense of the House was very apparent, particularly respecting your procedure against the three Waggoners, who it was hoped would be brought to condign punishment, and it was the earnest desire to the Delegates of this State, that you should be acquainted therewith, therefore I

am so particular in this relation, although I think it unnecessary. Our State opposed the Resolution, informing Congress we sought no Compliment but justice. I hope you will not forget to furnish me with a copy of the Letter found on the Serjeant. I must not omit mentioning that your Letter on the Subject did the State great honor and extorted a compliment from a quarter least expected, and the President desired me to allow him to take a Copy. While I write, much interrupted by Congress, I am informed that you have taken up seven retailers of Counterfeit money. This oppy. I hope will not be omitted to do justice to our injured cause, which at the same time will strongly mark the propriety of Congress in the late Resolves requiring the payment of all provisions either in kind or in gold and Silver. I am respectfully, Sir, Yr. most ob. huml serv.

Daniel Roberdeau

RC (PHarH).

<sup>1</sup> See JCC, 10:101; and Roberdeau to Wharton, January 26, 1778, note 1. See also Washington's January 30 letter to Gen. William Howe in Washington, *Writings* (Fitzpatrick), 10:408-9.

## George Frost to Josiah Bartlett

Sir, York Town Jany. 31st. 1778

I wrote to the Honoble President on the 24th Instant<sup>1</sup> and Inclosed to him a warrant of the 23d from the Treasurer, on Esqr. Gilman for 50,000 Dollars.<sup>2</sup> Hope it will come safe to hand & be duly hond. but if there should not be money in the Office to pay the same, you'll be kind enough to Inform me as soon as possible, that we may contrive some other way for a suppoly. Should have been glad to have done it before, but could not perswade the Treasury board to joine in a Report sooner. A Committee of Congress (Genl. Folsom is one) is at Camp to settle measures for the next Campaign; hope it will be more succesfull one here then the last. What was the cause or to whom to lay the Charge I know not that the Enemy should make such parade in and out Philada., when our Continental army was nigh double to that of the Enemy. It is said that a Council of Officers in the Army has proposed to Genl. Washington to nominate 6 Leut. Genls said Leut. Genls to nominate 12 Majr. Genls. and the Majr. Genls. to nominate 24 Brigr. Genls. It is also said that the said Officers propose that all the solders shall take an Oath of fidelity to their Officers. It is also proposed that all Officers in the army to be settled on half pay that may not be in actual levies on the Conclusion of the war, and that all Officers Widows shall have a penson dureing their widowhood, we have some advocates in Congress for the penson. Your prudence will sergest how far to Communicate this Inteligence;



should be glad to have your and our best formd Oppinon on the Matter. Inclosed you have sundry Resolves of Congress which came from the press after I had sealed Mine to the hond. President. We have had lately arrived in North Carolina 129 bales of woolings & linnens for use of the Continent or States which came from France by the way of the West Indies. Have no public letters. The Vessel (under French Coullers) was borded by an English friget was obliged to distroy her English papers for fear of being taken, a paragraft of a letter from a Merchant in London in August to a Genl. Officer in New York writes that both public & privet Credit is Greatly sunk, that Bankruptures are frequent and that they would be more so if they ware not supported by the bank, that Subscriptions in the new loan which proposes 5 per cent to the lenders goes on slowly and that the Dutch refuse to Subscribe anything, that bills are already sold at considerable discount 20  $\frac{3}{8}$  per cent and that every thing there depended on the present campaign being decisive. As they are disapointed in this I hope they will be disapointed in all their future plans is the hartey prayer of your most Obt. humble Sevt.

Geo. Frost

RC (NN).

<sup>1</sup> Not found.

<sup>2</sup> Congress had authorized this \$50,000 payment on January 23. See *JCC*, 10:86.

## Cornelius Harnett to Richard Caswell

Dear Sir

York Town Jany. 31st. 1778

I take the Liberty to inclose to your Excellency the Last papers to which I refer you for news. I am glad to find Our Assembly have Opened the Courts as well as the Land Office. I wish this measure had taken place sooner; the Taxes also I hope will be soon Collected, this measure of Taxation unless entered into with spirit by the Legislatures of the Several States, must end in the ruin of the prodigious Quantity of Paper money now in Circulation. The Grand Army still remain encamped at Valey Forge; unless a Large Body of the Militia of the adjacent States immediately reinforce them, I have little reason to expect any thing dissisive can possibly be done this winter, as we are told Genl. Howes Lines are exceeding Strong—and should Genl. How be reinforced in the Spring, by a Strong Body of Troops I suppose we shall have warm work—Unless France & Spaine declare War & this, notwithstanding the great preparation made by those Powers, is very uncertain, France finds her Account in In-grossing the whole Trade of these States without entering into a War with so formidable a Power as G. Britain.

I could have wished Our G. Assembly had fallen upon the Means

of Calling in all our paper money Issued under the Sanction of the Crown, great distinction has been made by the dissaffected in this and many Other States, an evil universally complained of, & has been remedied in Several very Effectually, by Calling it all in, at a Certain day, after which it is not redeemable by any future tax, neither is it to be taken as a Tendre. In some States, Treasurers notes bearing Interest are given in lieu of this kind of money, redeemable in One Year.

Congress have a high Sense of the Offer made by Our Country, of marching 5000 militia to the Assistance of the Grand Army, and greatly applaud their Spirit, whether they will be called for, is not yet known. I suppose they will not (having so great a distance to march) unless in case of Immergency. But this is no more than my Private Opinion & not to be mentioned.

I take the Liberty to inclose a Memorandum which Mr. R. Henry Lee put into my hands a few weeks ago, which has been mislaid.<sup>1</sup> I shall be happy in receiving a Line from Yr. Excellency when you can find Leisure and am with Great Respect, Your Excellency's Most Obed & very hul Servt.<sup>2</sup>

Cornl. Harnett

RC (PHi).

<sup>1</sup> Lee's memorandum has not been found.

<sup>2</sup> For the continuation of this letter, see Harnett to Caswell, February 3, 1778.

## Robert Morris to John Brown

Dear Sir

Manheim Jany 31st. 1778

I received your favour by Capt Barry with its inclosures for which I thank you & herewith send a Packet for Mess Hewes & Smith which I beg you will forward by their express and inform me per first Conveyance whether the Committee send them any money. I shou'd also if agreeable to the Committee be glad to see H & S's letter to them which shall be returned again if you send it to me.

Congress last Fall gave 100 Blank Commissions for Privateers or Letters of Marque to the Commercial Committee to be sent abroad to their agents. I beg you will put six of them under a Cover to Mr. John Ross to the care of Messrs Saml & J.H. Delap in Bourdeaux & put that letter under a Cover to Capt Patrick Barry & send it to him at Mess Hewes & Smith by their express. Mr Ross will have opportunity to make use of these Commissions agreeable to the designs of Congress and I have promised him they shou'd be sent. Your compliance will oblige, Dr sir, your obedt hble servt.

Robt Morris

RC (PHi).

## APPENDIX

### Robert Morris to James Wilson

Dear Sir

York in Pennsylvania Octr. 22d. 1777

The Account of Genl. Gates's glorious Success is not yet confirmed from himself & yet the Authority is too good to admit of any doubts. Govr. Geo. Clinton had the Account from the Committee of Albany & gave it [to Genl Putnam]<sup>1</sup> who handed to Genl Was[hington] & he to Congress in Substance thus. That a Capitulation was signed the 14 Inst. by Genl Burgoyne by which he & his whole army Surrendered themselves Prisoners of War, they marched with the Honors of War to a Certain Spot where they grounded their Arms & from thence were sent Prisoners to Massachusetts. No other particulars are given in these letters; but private letters & reports tell us of 40 Brass Field pieces, 10,000 Stand of arms, Cloathing, Stores &c but for all this we wait most impatiently for Genl Gates's dispatches & surely they will come soon.

We are told also that Genl Gates was coming down against Fort Montgomery which had lately, been taken by Genl. Sir Henry Clinton with the Troops he had in the City of N.York on Long & Staten Island together with a reinforcement lately recd from England. I think there is no doubt but Gates will soon regain Fort Montgomery as his Army is Numerous, Strong & flushed with Vict[ory . . .] it is Said, has 5000 Men [ . . .] he is approaching New York as we are told here, it is also Said that 7000 Men are actually going against Rhode Island from whence they will certainly dislodge the Enemy.

We also have it here that Genl Howe is flying onboard his Ships having quitted his Camp at Germantown & our Army have taken possession of it.

I think Genl Howe is obliged to come on this side Schuylkill to open the Land Communication with the Fleet at Chester & to open his way to a supply of provisions from the Country as our little Navy on the Delaware maintain their post & Genl Potter had [stopped] the intercourse between the City & Country. Genl Washington I suppose will follow & we may Soon expect another Action. It appears to me that Genl Howe is now in a bad way, for if the News from the Northward be all true We may sweep New York & in the End serve him as Gates Served Burgoyne. But [ . . .] all good News. As to Elections I can tell you little about them, at this place I am told there was only fifteen



Voters, at Lancaster G. Ross says there was only 11. Be this as it may the New Assembly will meet and go on with business and really I think it is dangerous to the State to give opposition whilst it is Invaded. Let us Settle the grand Contest in favour of America, & then amend & alter the Constitution to the liking of the Majority & happiness of the whole.

I beg my Compts. to Mrs. Wilson & will pay you a Visit soon as I conveniently can, when I can tell you more than I can Spare time to write now. Mr. Penn wanted me to inclose you some extracts of a very extra' letter but I desired him to do it himself, which he has complied with. I am my Dr Sir, Your affectionate Friend, & Obedt. hble servt.

Robt. Morris

P.S. Pray my Compts to Genl. [. . .] recd his letter respecting [. . .] G. Stevenson whom I shall be glad to serve but have not seen the Young Gentn.

P.S. A further Confirmation of Burgoynes Surrender with all his officers, Forces &c.

1 Lieutt. General

2 Major General

6 or 7 Brigadiers

the other necessary officers & 5000 privates

40 Brass Field pieces

15,000 Stand of fire Arms

Cloathing, Stores, &c.

Genl Howe has drawn his Men, down towards Philadelphia & our Army closed in upon them. Something must happen there soon.

RC (York County, Pa., Bicentennial Commission, 1981). This letter, which was acquired by the commission as this volume was in the final stages of production, was furnished through the courtesy of Mr. John F. Rauhauser, Jr., president of the commission. Although it contains the fullest account of the news from Saratoga that had reached York at this time, some of the information Morris reported is nearly identical to that contained in the postscript to John Penn's October 22, 1777, letter to Arthur Middleton. See p. 159 above.

<sup>1</sup> For the transmission of this news by the Albany Committee of Safety and General Putnam, see p. 148 n. 1 above.



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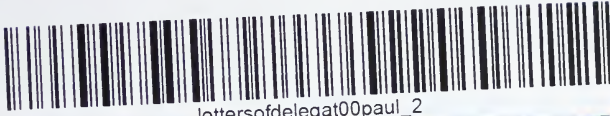




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